

PRESS RELEASE

VIBRANT CELEBRATION IN VENICE OF EHMA'S 50th ANNIVERSARY

The achievement of this important milestone coincided with the Annual General Assembly of the Association held at the Hotel Excelsior Venice Lido Resort attended by an impressive number of participants.



The Organizing Committee Venice 2024 with President EHMA Panos Almyrantis and Italy National Delegate Ezio A. Indiani

An extraordinary program focusing on Human Capital and the Challenge of Engaging New Young Professionals in Hospitality welcomed the group of General Managers from the most prestigious European hotels who gathered at the iconic Hotel Excelsior Lido Resort in Venice from April 12 to 14 for the Annual General Assembly of the EHMA, marking the 50th anniversary of the Association.

"I wish to commend our Golden Jubilee's outstanding success held in the enchanting city of Venice, commented **EHMA President Panos Almyrantis, National Delegate Greece & Cyprus and Chief Development Officer (CDO) Ella Resorts in Athens.** "This milestone gathering not only exemplified our **commitment to education and industry collaboration** but also highlighted the **enduring spirit of our association over the past fifty years.** Venice provided a captivating setting for this occasion, enhancing the overall experience for all participants. **The event was a testament to the dedication and enthusiasm of our members, sponsors, and partners who contributed to its success.** I extend my sincere gratitude to everyone involved in making this event unforgettable, from the organizing team to the distinguished speakers and engaged attendees. Together, we have

set a remarkable precedent for future endeavors and **reaffirmed our shared vision of excellence in hospitality management across Europe**. Here's to continued success and innovation in the next fifty years and beyond."

"Venice is the vibrant venue that we, Italian Chapter, strongly wanted for EHMA's 50th anniversary, the EHMA golden Jubilee. The Venetian Organizing Committee has worked with great enthusiasm and passion to organize a most exciting program", joins in **Ezio A. Indiani, National Delegate Italy** and General Manager Hotel Principe di Savoia Milan. "The **first General Assembly** was held in 1974 at the Rome Cavalieri Hilton with 20 participants. Today, after 50 years, we are here in Venice to celebrate **the Association's jubilee with an attendance of 395 people**. We have come a long way!"

Three prestigious awards were presented during the splendid closing gala dinner in the spectacular Louis XIV-style "Sala degli Stucchi" of the Hotel Excelsior: **Alessio Lazizzera**, General Manager of the Hotel Excelsior Venice Lido Resort was elected **European Hotel Manager of the Year 2024**; **Pedro Pinto**, General Manager of Corpo Santo Lisbon Historical Hotel was the winner of the **EHMA Sustainability Award by Diversey 2024**, and **Michael Gray**, former General Manager of the 5-Star Hyatt Regency London - The Churchill and Vice President UK for Hyatt International, received the **Hans Koch Lifetime Achievement Award 2024**.

The program

The **official session on Friday 12 April** opened with the **video "EHMA – Celebrating 50 Years of Excellence"**, produced by Gianni Buonsante of Ingenia Direct, featuring memories from a continuous string of extraordinary Annual General Meetings held each year in a different European city.

Among other topics discussed, **EHMA President Panos Almyrantis** reported about the present situation of the Association.

Next, Ivan Artolli on behalf of the entire committee presented the **"Mentor Me" program** carried out by EHMA Italy, which has now reached its 5th edition with great success.

To reward members' efforts towards protecting the environment, uplifting the communities, and demonstrating good business conduct, EHMA has conceived the Best Practices Award, which this year on the ESG theme, was presented to **André Cheminade, General Manager Hotel des Horlogers, Vallée de Joux, in the Swiss Canton of Vaud**, for meeting the most demanding eco-responsible standards working in harmony with the hotel's environment. This was followed by the presentation of the cities that will host the next annual events: **Warsaw in 2025 and London in 2026**.

The **President of HOTREC, Alexandros Vassilikos**, reported the new developments throughout Europe related to key issues such as talent shortage and sustainability. Next, **Executive Vice President Europe Preferred Travel Goup, Brenda Collin**, explained the benefits of the partnership recently set up between the two organizations in terms of **mutual opportunities in the high-end hotel industry**, networking, visibility, promotion and communication.

In order to **inspire young people to enter a profession in the hospitality industry**, EHMA collaborates with leading international hotel schools such as École Hôtelière de Lausanne and Nolan Cornell. The **Young EHMA 2024 Group** participated in a working session led by Ian Millar, Manager of Institute of Business Creativity & Senior Lecturer at **École Hôtelière de Lausanne**. The group is composed of young hoteliers, presented by the various delegations, with a certain level of experience (junior managers/department heads) who are offered the opportunity to

participate in the EHMA Annual General Meeting. Nine deserving young hoteliers who submitted a brilliant project were present and reported findings and recommendations.

Twenty-six new members were officially introduced and inducted, a sign of continuing significant growth in membership, which now totals 449.

A superb **Cocktail Dinatoire closed the day at Palazzo Pisani Moretta**, a sumptuous 15th century gothic private palace overlooking the Grand Canal.

The **Educational Day** on April 13 was opened by the welcome remarks of **Simone Venturini, Deputy Mayor for Tourism, City of Venice. Alessio Lazazzera, Chairman of the Venice Organizing Committee** and General Manager of the Hotel Excelsior Venice Lido Resort, pointed out that it is the hotels' human capital that determines the guests' degree of satisfaction. "General Managers are like film directors", Lazazzera said. "Instead of casts, we have staff, and it is our job **to bring out the best in each staff member**, spark their enthusiasm and provide them with the tools and resources they need to excel".

Francesco di Cesare, President Risposte Turismo, introduced **the theme of the meeting "Human Capital"** presenting the results of an unpublished survey carried out in collaboration with EHMA which, thanks to listening to over 120 European General Managers, highlighted challenges and common aspects of the European hotel industry with regards to human capital.

The subject of **Sustainability and Social Responsibility** as compelling drivers for young talents' attraction and retention was addressed by **Christoph Steindorf, Leader Business Development and Corporate Accounts Healthcare at Solenis/Diversey**. What really matters to the new generations was illustrated by **Antoinette Dale Henderson, Executive Coach & Founder of the Gravitas Programme**.

The vital question for the hospitality industry **"Luxury Tourism & Hospitality is growing back in Europe but will we run out of staff?"** was debated in a **Round Table** composed by Inés Blal, Professor and past Executive Dean at École Hôtelière de Lausanne; Marco Ceresa, Group Chief Executive Officer Randstad Italia; Alessandro Ferrazza, Researcher (PhD), MBA, PGCert HE University of London; Bruce Tracey, Professor of HR Management at Nolan School, Cornell University. The discussion was moderated by Francesca Senette, journalist and life coach, and Anthony La Salandra, Managing Director Risposte Turismo. The participants represented **different fields in order to deepen the new and future trends** that will influence the working and private life of the employees, such as staff shortage, how to adapt to the new trends or whether there is a need to refocus activities for a better involvement of new young professionals.

An open dialogue between generations about the **reasons to choose tourism as a profession** followed, with Panos Almyrantis, EHMA President, and Ezio A. Indiani, National Delegate Italy and former EHMA President, facing two **young graduates from EHL**: Emma Latteux and Tara Zehnder, moderated by Sebastián Fernandez, Associate Professor École Hôtelière de Lausanne.

Massimo Canducci, university professor, author and international speaker, focused about the **acquisition, management and retention of employees** providing a futuristic outlook considering how fast technology is moving and how young professionals are digital-native.

Seeking to **widen the perspective**, a **round table** took place with the participation of **representatives from the tourism sector**: Bruno Fournet, HR Director, Center of Excellence Learning Development Disneyland Paris; Roberto Mascali, External Affairs, Umama; Jennifer Tombaugh, President Tauck and President ETOA; Alberto Valenza, Human Capital &

Organization, Health & Safety, Rome Airports; moderated by Francesca Senette and Anthony La Salandra.

Developing the future of emerging hospitality leaders through inner development was the theme of the speech by Marco Truffelli, Co-owner and Managing Director Rufflets St Andrews and co-founder of Resilirē Psychological Growth, together with Jan Ferris, clinical psychologist and co-founder Resilirē Psychological Growth.

Petros Papageorgiou, On-Premises Sales Director Heineken Italy, spoke about the support that the beer industry can give to hospitality to hire new talents.

The **closing speech motivating attendees to start involving, engage and support to win** was delivered by Sir John Kirwan, globally recognized mental health advocate, author, entrepreneur and a rugby legend.

On Friday the **accompanying guests** had the opportunity to visit **The Peggy Guggenheim Collection**, one of the most important museums of European and American art of the 20th century in Italy, and to enjoy a **guided tour of the picturesque Dorsoduro neighbourhood**. On Saturday morning they made a guided walk of the San Marco area with an internal visit of the **Doge's Palace**.

A delicious **Farewell Brunch** held in the Elimar Restaurant of the Hotel Excelsior marked the closing of the event.

The Assembly was held at the legendary **Hotel Excelsior Venice Lido Resort**, a historically significant Venetian palazzo, enriched by exotic Moorish architecture located directly on the sea in the Lido Island, home to the world-renowned Venice Film Festival and Biennale Art and Architecture exhibitions. Many participants stayed at the **JW Marriott Venice Resort and Spa**, managed by Cristiano Cabutti, beautifully situated on the private island of Isola delle Rose in the Venice lagoon, surrounded by a vast park filled with gardens, olive groves and exceptional amenities.

The fantastic program of the event was put together thanks to the incredible work of the **Organizing Committee supported by the Italian National Delegate Ezio A. Indiani** and composed by Alessio Lazazzera (Chairman) – General Manager Hotel Excelsior Venice Lido Resort; Cristiano Cabutti (Treasurer) - General Manager JW Marriott Venice Resort & Spa; Massimiliano Perversi – General Manager Hilton Mulino Stucky; Alain Bullo – General Manager Londra Palace; Paolo Morra – General Manager Sina Centurion Palace; Paolo Lorenzoni – General Manager The Gritti Palace; Nicolino Grigio – General Manager Palazzo Giovannelli; Salvatore Pisani – Complex General Manager Hotel Gabrielli & Splendid Venice.

Special thanks go to **EHMA's traditional partners** who always support the Association with great enthusiasm.

Identity Kit of EHMA

EHMA – European Hotel Managers Association was **founded in Rome in 1974 by prominent Hotel General Managers** of undisputed professional ethics with the aim of maintaining and enhancing the image of the hotel industry. It is composed of high-level hotel general managers who envision to be the preferred Association of Hotel Managers, **representing the most prestigious and unique hotels in Europe**. Supporting an inclusive and stimulating networking environment, sharing experiences, insights and support, and effectively communicating within the hotel industry, with integrity, loyalty and trust encompass the **Association's core values**. The Association

currently has over **440** members representing **23** European countries, **400** hotels, **86,000** rooms and **66,000** employees.

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