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## EHMA'S 51<sup>ST</sup> AGM IN WARSAW INSPIRES PROGRESS AND COLLABORATION IN LUXURY HOSPITALITY



*Panos Almyrantis (President of The European Hotel Managers Association), Pawel Lewtak (1<sup>st</sup> Vice President), and Stephan Stokkermans (Vice President) stand united in the majestic Ludwikowska Ballroom at the Polonia Palace Hotel, Warsaw—championing excellence in European hospitality.*

**Warsaw, 31 March 2025** – The European Hotel Managers Association (EHMA) held its 51<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Warsaw, Poland, from 28 to 30 March 2025, uniting general managers and senior hospitality leaders from Europe’s most prestigious luxury and premium hotels. Under the theme **“Hospitality by Design”**, the event explored how innovation, sustainability, design, and leadership are shaping the future of hospitality across the continent.

EHMA EUROPEAN HOTEL MANAGERS ASSOCIATION

[www.ehma.com/warsaw2025](http://www.ehma.com/warsaw2025)

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## Leadership Reconfirmed for 2025–2027

During the General Assembly, EHMA members re-elected **Panos Almyrantis** as President for the 2025–2027 term. **Pawel Lewtak** was appointed 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, and **Stephan Stokkermans** as Vice President. **Wilhelm Luxem** was reconfirmed as Chair of the Board of Auditors, joined by **Silvestro De Bolfo** (First Auditor) and **Verena Radlgruber-Forstinger** (Second Auditor). The Board of Arbiters welcomed **Cinzia Montelli** as Chair and **Erik-Jan Ginjaar** as First Arbiter.

“I am honoured to be re-elected by our members. I remain committed to fostering a collaborative, values-driven community. The past three years have been exceptionally successful, firmly establishing EHMA as the most influential and forward-thinking network for hotel executives across Europe,” said **Panos Almyrantis**, Chief Growth & Commercial Officer at Ella Resorts and 2014 European Hotel Manager of the Year.

## Awards Recognising Excellence in Hospitality

Four prestigious awards were presented during the AGM:

- **European Hotel Manager of the Year 2025: Ivica Max Krizmanić**, General Manager of Esplanade Zagreb Hotel (Croatia) – for exemplary leadership and innovation spanning over three decades at the helm of a hotel that is now celebrating its 100th anniversary.
- **EHMA Sustainability Award by Diversey 2025: Diego Roggero**, General Manager, Portrait Milano (Italy) – for his holistic and long-term commitment to environmental responsibility in a historic building.
- **EHMA Hans Koch Lifetime Achievement Award 2025: Johanna Fragano**, former Managing Director of Hotel Quirinale, Rome (Italy) – for a lifetime of dedication to hospitality excellence.
- **EHMA Best Practices Award 2024: Robert-Jan Woltering**, Managing Director of Hotel De L’Europe Amsterdam (Netherlands) – for the project “Why the Ultimate Hotel Guest Experience Matters,” highlighting ethical business leadership and responsible community engagement.

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## Event Highlights and Future AGM Host City Announcement

The AGM officially opened on Friday, 28 March, at the **iconic Ludwikowska Ballroom in historic Polonia Palace Hotel** with President Almyrantis leading the 51<sup>st</sup> Ordinary General Meeting. **“EHMA – Shining Stars”**, a film by Gianni Buonsante of Ingenia Direct, celebrated the achievements of EHMA members in 2024. Members confirmed **London** as the host city for the 52<sup>nd</sup> AGM in 2026, with **Helsinki** presented as a candidate for 2027. The event had a new design-oriented format, which facilitated improved information exchange between members and partners, employing a more sustainable approach through cloud-based information exchange and NFC technology. This was followed by a **Cocktail Reception** at the **Polonia Palace Hotel**.

“We are proud that **Warsaw became the capital of European hospitality**. Its unique combination of historic charm and modern energy made it the perfect host for this year’s AGM,” said **Pawel Lewtak**, EHMA 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, General Manager of Polonia Palace Hotel, and co-CEO of Syrena Hotels. “The city reflects creativity and resilience, much like our industry.”

## Strategic Partnerships and Membership Growth

**Brenda Collin**, Executive Vice President Europe – Preferred Travel Group, presented the benefits of EHMA’s new strategic partnership with **Preferred Hotels & Resorts**, designed to enhance member networking, visibility, and brand positioning.

EHMA officially welcomed 12 new members: **Pavlos Badouvakis (Greece)**, **Vittorio Di Carlo (Italy)**, **Francisco Garcia (Spain)**, **Jil-Marie Harml (Austria)**, **Lee Kelly (Ireland)**, **Panagiotis Markou (Greece)**, **Eric Paulus (Belgium)**, **Piero Pastore (Italy)**, **Klara Šoštarić (Croatia)**, **Konstantinos Stroutzos (Greece)**, **Yannis Vamvoukakis (Greece)**, and **Daniele Vastolo (Italy)**, expanding the association’s membership to 476 professionals across Europe.

## Educational Day: “Hospitality by Design”

Held on Saturday, 29 March, at the **Renaissance Warsaw Airport Hotel**, the Educational Conference featured forward-thinking speakers and expert panels exploring industry-shaping topics:

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- **Leadership & Strategy** – Pawel Motyl on navigating complexity and high-stakes strategy formation.
- **Technology & AI** – Prof. Andrzej Wodecki and Paola Gariglio on artificial intelligence in hotel management.
- **Sustainability** – Manuel Engelsthal, Christoph Steindorf, Alexa Poortier, Onno Poortier, and Andres Fellenberg Van der Molen on the challenges of decarbonisation, ESG implementation, recent innovations, and strategies for compliance with EU regulations (ESG & CSR).
- **People & Culture** – Nick Driessen and Paola Vulterini on inclusive leadership and accessible guest experiences.
- **Hospitality Keynote** – Prof. Dr Ian Yeoman on future scenarios in food tourism and experience innovation.
- **Design & Experience** – Joanna Jurga on the emotional and functional power of neuroarchitecture.
- **Design Keynote** – Adam D. Tihany, world-famous designer, on why design matters: from inspiration to process and creating value.
- **Closing Remarks** – Clare Shine on industry-wide responsibility for accelerating sustainable transformation.
- **Sports Keynote** – Szymon Marciniak, FIFA and UEFA international referee, on performance under pressure and team leadership.

## Cultural Programme and Social Events

Accompanying guests participated in a curated **Royal & Cultural Programme** showcasing Warsaw's history, culinary heritage, and design culture. The day concluded with a formal **Awards Gala Dinner in Sheraton Grand Warsaw**, and on Sunday, 30 March, the **Farewell Brunch at Polonia Palace Hotel** brought the event to a close.

“For one weekend, Warsaw became the capital of European hospitality – bringing together visionary leaders, pioneering ideas, and a shared commitment to shaping the future of luxury and premium hotel management.”

## Acknowledgements and Partners

EHMA extends sincere thanks to the Organising Committee and partners whose generous support made the event a success:

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Acqua di Parma, Amadeus, APS, Axpro Concept, Blastness, Canary Technologies, Casale del Giglio, Nolan Cornell University School of Hotel Administration, De Cecco, Diversey – A Solenis Company, EHL Hospitality Business School, France24, Frette, Gascón, Getpica, Hästens, Heineken, Hotel Management International, Ingenia Direct, Journal des Palaces, Kuohu Artesian Water, La Bottega, Laurent-Perrier, Lavazza, Markas, Maurel, MobieTrain, NOW Transforming Hospitality, Preferred Hotels & Resorts, RESILIRÉ Psychological Growth, Rivolta Carmignani, Samsung, Scent Company, Villeroy & Boch.

## About the European Hotel Managers Association (EHMA)

Founded in Rome in 1974, the European Hotel Managers Association (EHMA) is a prestigious non-profit organisation committed to excellence in Europe's luxury hospitality industry. With a membership of nearly **500** top professionals overseeing more than **1,200** premier hotels across 24 countries, EHMA fosters leadership, innovation, and the highest service standards. Through educational initiatives, networking events, and industry research, EHMA drives knowledge-sharing and professional growth while shaping a sustainable, forward-thinking future for European hospitality.

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