FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EHMA ITALIAN CHAPTER EXPLORES HOW NEUROSCIENCE IS REDEFINING THE GASTRONOMIC EXPERIENCE IN LUXURY HOSPITALITY AT ITS AUTUMN MEETING IN SANREMO

The Italian Chapter Autumn Meeting, held alongside EHMA's Extraordinary General Meeting, brought together European hospitality leaders to celebrate excellence, foster collaboration and explore the future of luxury hospitality.

Sanremo, 2 November 2026 – The Italian Chapter of the European Hotel Managers Association (EHMA), the Association's largest national delegation, successfully convened its Autumn Meeting in the elegant coastal city of Sanremo from 30 October to 1 November 2026. Hosted by EHMA member **Marco Sarlo** at the prestigious **Royal Hotel Sanremo**, the event brought together leading Italian hotel general managers alongside distinguished colleagues from across Europe for an inspiring weekend of insightful dialogue, knowledge exchange, networking and professional excellence.

The event also provided the backdrop for **EHMA's Extraordinary General Meeting**, convened to review and approve key amendments to the Association's Statutes. This significant institutional milestone reinforced EHMA's ongoing commitment to strong governance, enhanced collaboration among its national delegations, and the continued evolution of the Association to meet the emerging challenges and opportunities of the European luxury hospitality sector.

Saturday's programme also included a meeting of the **EHMA Management Council**, bringing together National Delegates from across Europe to exchange perspectives and advance the Association's shared strategic priorities.

"The Autumn Meeting is always one of the most important moments in the life of our Delegation," said **Ezio A. Indiani, EHMA National Delegate for Italy and General Manager of Hotel Principe di Savoia, Milan**. "It offers our members a valuable opportunity to reconnect, exchange perspectives on the evolving hospitality landscape and actively contribute to decisions shaping the future of our Association. This year, the presence of the Management Council and colleagues from other European delegations added an even stronger international dimension to our gathering, creating meaningful opportunities for dialogue and collaboration. EHMA Italy continues to demonstrate remarkable dynamism and sustained growth, developing innovative projects and initiatives that engage an ever-expanding community of members."

Awards Recognising Excellence and Emerging Talent

Two prestigious awards were presented during the Gala Dinner, celebrating outstanding leadership, professional achievement and the development of future hospitality talent.

Italian Hotel General Manager of the Year 2026: Cristiano Cabutti, General Manager of **W Milan**, was honoured for his strategic vision, courage to innovate and exceptional ability to deliver outstanding results. His leadership exemplifies the capacity to inspire people, nurture future leaders and transform a shared vision into meaningful achievements.

Stefano Biscioni Scholarship Award 2026: Toni Martinciglio, Executive Assistant Manager at **Villa Igiea Palermo – Rocco Forte Hotels**, was recognised as the winner of the second edition of this prestigious award for Best Mentee of the seventh cycle of the Italian Mentor Me programme. Throughout his mentoring journey, he distinguished himself through enthusiasm, curiosity, passion and determination, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to continuous learning and professional development. His ability to transform the mentoring experience into a meaningful pathway for personal and career growth embodies the values at the heart of EHMA's commitment to nurturing the next generation of hospitality leaders.

Both awards were presented by **Ezio A. Indiani**, EHMA National Delegate for Italy, during the prestigious Gala Dinner at the Royal Hotel Sanremo.

Event Highlights and EHMA's Extraordinary General Meeting

The gathering officially commenced on Friday, 30 October, with a welcome cocktail and dinner hosted in the elegant lobby of the Royal Hotel Sanremo. Set against the stunning backdrop of the hotel's magnificent terrace, the evening provided a warm and convivial atmosphere for members and guests to reconnect and celebrate the spirit of friendship and camaraderie that defines the EHMA community.

Saturday morning was devoted to the Italian Chapter's institutional proceedings, during which members reviewed the Association's agenda and discussed ongoing projects and strategic initiatives designed to strengthen EHMA's role in shaping the future of luxury hospitality.

The second part of the session was dedicated to **EHMA's Extraordinary General Meeting**, a pivotal moment in the Association's institutional life. Members gathered to review and approve important amendments to the Statutes. The discussions reflected EHMA's commitment to responsible governance, transparency and long-term

development, reinforcing the shared values of integrity, loyalty and trust that underpin its European network.

Leadership Wellbeing and the Future of Luxury Hospitality

Professional development and the wellbeing of hospitality leaders remained central to the programme.

Marco Truffelli, EHMA member and co-founder of RESILIRĒ - Psychological Growth, presented an update on his Oxford Brookes University doctoral research into the impact of Acceptance and Commitment Training and Coaching on burnout among European luxury hotel General Managers. Through his engaging and interactive *"What's in Your Cup?"* exercise, he invited members to reflect on the pressures stretching their leadership capacity and the power of choosing what truly matters, sharing a vision of hospitality as a defining profession of the post-AI era, capable of inspiring a new human Renaissance by placing the irreplaceable value of authentic relationships, attention and care at its heart.

Educational Insights: How Neuroscience Is Transforming the Gastronomic Experience

A highlight of the gathering was the thought-provoking keynote delivered by **Professor Vincenzo Russo**, one of Italy's foremost authorities on neuromarketing and its application to food and gastronomy.

Under the compelling theme **"The Brain at the Table: How Neuroscience Is Redefining the Gastronomic Experience in Luxury Hospitality"**, Professor Russo engaged attendees with a fascinating exploration of the cognitive and emotional processes that shape guest perceptions, influence decision-making, and define memorable dining experiences.

His presentation offered valuable insights into how neuroscience can enhance guest engagement and elevate the gastronomic journey within the luxury hospitality industry. By exploring the psychological and neurological drivers of guest behaviour, the session revealed new opportunities for luxury hotels to enrich culinary experiences, strengthen emotional connections and create memorable moments that extend beyond traditional notions of service excellence.

The session underscored an increasingly important principle within contemporary hospitality: truly exceptional guest experiences are shaped not only by outstanding products and impeccable service, but also by a profound understanding of human perception, expectations, and emotional engagement.

Discovering Sanremo: Culture, Heritage and Hospitality

Beyond the institutional and educational programme, the gathering offered participants an opportunity to discover the distinctive cultural heritage of the Italian Riviera.

On Saturday afternoon, guests were invited to discover the timeless charm of **La Pigna**, Sanremo's historic medieval quarter through a guided walking tour exploring the city's historic streets, architectural treasures and authentic Ligurian character.

Later that evening, the magnificent **Sala Fiori di Murano** at the Royal Hotel Sanremo provided a truly exceptional setting for the prestigious Gala Dinner. The celebration brought together EHMA members and guests in an atmosphere of elegance, friendship and shared achievement. The evening culminated in the presentation of the Italian Hotel General Manager of the Year 2026 and the Stefano Biscioni Scholarship Award, recognising outstanding achievement, leadership, and the development of future hospitality leaders.

The gathering concluded with a sumptuous Farewell Brunch at the Royal Hotel Sanremo, offering a final opportunity to reflect on shared experiences, strengthen professional connections and celebrate another successful chapter in the life of EHMA Italy.

Distinguished Host Hotels: Celebrating the Heritage of Italian Hospitality

The **Royal Hotel Sanremo**, which hosted the principal institutional and social events, provided an exceptional setting for the gathering. Opened in 1872, this historic five-star landmark overlooks the Mediterranean and is surrounded by an elegant subtropical park. For more than 150 years, the Royal Hotel has embodied the finest traditions of luxury hospitality on the Italian Riviera, seamlessly combining timeless elegance, distinguished heritage and contemporary service excellence.

The **Europa Palace**, another prestigious five-star property in the heart of Sanremo, also welcomed participants. Dating back to 1874, the hotel has undergone an extensive renovation, embracing a contemporary identity while preserving the historic character and refined hospitality that define its legacy.

Together, these distinguished properties showcased the rich heritage, exceptional standards and enduring appeal of Italian luxury hospitality.

Partner Acknowledgements

EHMA extends its sincere gratitude to **Marco Sarlo**, the Italian Chapter and the Organising Committee for their unwavering dedication, alongside the esteemed partners of EHMA Italian Chapter, whose generous support contributed to the success of the Sanremo Autumn Meeting and Extraordinary General Meeting.

Among these valued partners are **Bellantoni, Blastness, Bonfante Interior Contractor, Casale del Giglio, Culti Milano, De Cecco, Dorelan, Dream&Charme, Edition Bougainville, Ferrarini, Gascón Group, Getpica, Hotelcube, Il Mondo di Scimpa, Ingenia Direct, Iniziative Venete Group, La Bottega Collective, Laurent-Perrier, Maurel, Mepra, Pedersoli Milano, Scent Company, Sound Solutions, Syeew, Teamwork Hospitality and Verdant by Copeland**.

Their continued commitment and collaboration play an important role in supporting EHMA's initiatives, fostering innovation and strengthening the professional relationships that contribute to the Association's success across Europe.

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 523 top professionals overseeing more than 400 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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