

PRESS RELEASE

"INSPIRING THE FUTURE"

**The challenges facing the future of hospitality were discussed at the
EHMA 49th Annual General Meeting in Lisbon, Portugal**



The Portuguese Organising Committee

The need to develop a more holistic approach in luxury hospitality and to motivate new talents to undertake the hotel profession was highlighted several times during the comprehensive program prepared for the group of General Managers of the most prestigious European hotels who gathered at the Four Seasons Hotel Ritz in Lisbon from February 10 to 12 for the 49th annual General Assembly of the EHMA.

“Although hospitality has proven its resilience and is doubtless recovering worldwide after the pandemic - comments **Panos Almyrantis, President EHMA, National Delegate EHMA Greece & Cyprus and GM of the Grand Hyatt Athens** – we are faced today by new serious challenges, namely shortage of young talents, soaring energy costs, inflation. Luxury hotels need to **adapt and rethink** the way they do business: place the **wellbeing of the guests** at the centre, provide local experiences, improve the human touch and attention to detail, while at the same time the attitude towards work organization needs to be redesigned to a more flexible scheme. This is also the purpose of the General Assemblies that bring together members each year in a different European city, in order to **network, exchange ideas and experiences, and get inspiration for the future** from renowned speakers coming from diverse cultures and professions”.

Three prestigious awards were presented during the amazing closing gala dinner in magnificent Pedro Leitão Ballroom: **Emmy Stoel**, General Manager of the Sofitel Legend The Grand Amsterdam, was elected **European Hotel Manager of the Year 2023**; **Giuseppe Rossi**, General Manager Hotel Royal Splendide Lugano was the winner of the **EHMA Sustainability Award** by

Diversey 2023, and **José Colomar**, owner of the Hotel Royal Plaza in Ibiza, received the **Hans Koch Lifetime Achievement Award 2023**.

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 2023 Group** participated in a working session led by Ian Millar, Senior Lecturer Hospitality Technology Strategy 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. Also, a small group of deserving students of EHL was assigned a thesis project named **“Is the Hotel General Manager a dream work for the future? Why to become one?”**. Representing the group, Héloïse Gauthier was present to report findings.

Among the various topics covered during the General Assembly on Friday afternoon 10 February, **President Almyrantis** in his report emphasised the **importance of solid cooperation and synergy** with hotel school and associations, Hotrec and other industry organizations. Last but not least, the fundamental collaboration with supporting partners that are essential in the life of the Association.

One of the highlights of the AGM was the awarding of **honorary membership to Johanna Fragano** for her invaluable contribution to the Association.

During the “members time”, the video **“EHMA Shining Stars 2022”**, produced by Gianni Buonsante of Ingenia Direct, was shown, featuring some of the EHMA members awarded in 2022. **Marco Truffelli** then presented an interesting talk on “Lost & Found – Inner development for sustainable outer impact”. This was followed by the presentation of the cities that will host the next annual events: Venice in 2024 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary and Warsaw in 2025.

18 new members were officially introduced and inducted, a sign of significant growth in membership, which now totals 400. “Despite the difficult years”, says **President Panos Almyrantis**, “the sense of belonging has prevailed over the difficulties”.

The joint winners of the **EHMA Best practices 2022** “Talent Retention and Human Culture” were also announced: Stratos Patsakis, Minos Beach Art Hotel in Crete, and Pedro Pinto, Corpo Santo Hotel Lisbon.

A lively **Welcome Cocktail and Dinner** closed the day at Pátio da Galé, an impressive venue situated under the historical arcades in one of the city’s most emblematic squares, Praça do Comércio.

The **Educational Day** on February 11 was opened by the Welcome remarks of the **Mayor of Lisbon, Mr. Carlos Moedas**, who inspired the audience sharing his dreams about the future of the city.

Simon Casson, President Hotel Operations EMEA at Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts, spoke about the desire to pursue excellence with passion and determination while sharing remembrances of his own life and career. Although the human touch is a prerequisite in luxury hospitality, at the same time Artificial Intelligence is taking a giant stride forward, as described by **Manuela Veloso, Head JP Morgan Chase AI Research**. The subject of inevitability of changes at this time in history was addressed by **Frank Theis, Chief Customer Officer at Diversey**, while **Lorenzo Montagna, Founder Second Star VR**, clarified what Metaverse is and why it is relevant for the travel and hospitality industry. Energy, another hot topic of the moment, was the theme of **Vera Pinto’s, Member of the Executive Board of Directors of EDP – Energias de Portugal**. Architects **Artur Miranda and Jacques Bec from Oito em Ponto**, discussed the best ways to modernize a historic hotel décor while retaining its atmosphere and flavor, as exemplified by their

work on the renovation of the Four Seasons Hotel Ritz Lisbon. The new **President of HOTREC, Alexandros Vassilikos**, President of the Hellenic Chamber of Commerce (HCH), addressed several key issues such as talent shortage, sustainability and digitalization. Finally, the intervention of **Philip Boyen, Luxury Hospitality Consultant, Senior Advisor Corinthia Hotels, Ambassador Forbes Travel Guide**, was fascinating and humorous, speaking aptly about the importance of putting the purpose of your hotel, your business, before profit and profit will come (not the other way around) and reminding how important it is for General Managers to talk to the younger generation and not just in high schools or hotel schools but also in colleges.

Accompanying persons were given the opportunity to **discover the beautiful city of Lisbon** and its surroundings choosing between an unusual tour by tuk tuk, a wine and vineyards tour, a museum & historic district walk and an excursion to Cascais and Sintra.

The event was held at the iconic **Four Seasons Hotel Ritz Lisbon, managed by EHMA member Guilherme Costa**. Located in the heart of Lisbon, this historic hotel embodies the cultural heart and soul of Portugal. The decor is an eclectic mix of art-deco and an updated Louis XVI style, while a collection of important contemporary local artwork fills the halls. The Michelin-starred CURA restaurant offers a seasonally inspired top gastronomic experience.

The event was perfectly organized by the Portuguese Committee composed of Francisco Pereira da Silva (Chairman) - Hotel Albatroz Beach & Yacht Club; Francisco Correa de Barros, Guilherme Costa (Four Seasons Hotel Ritz Lisbon); Alexandre de Almeida (Hotéis Alexandre De Almeida Lda.); Sandro Fabris; Pedro Pinto (Corpo Santo Hotel Lisbon). Special thanks also go to the EHMA traditional sponsors who are always very supportive of the Association.

About 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 today has **400 members representing 23 European countries** of which approximately 350 are General Managers of luxury hotels. In figures, this represents about **350 hotels, 85,000 rooms and 65,000 employees**.

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