

## From Rome to Warsaw: EHMA's 51st Annual Meeting Positions Poland as a Premier European Hub for Luxury Travel

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As the travel and hospitality industries across Europe evolve toward design-centric innovation, **Warsaw** is poised to become the global epicenter of this transformation. From **March 28 to 30, 2025**, the Polish capital will host the **51st Annual General Meeting (AGM)** of the **European Hotel Managers Association (EHMA)**, under the theme “**Hospitality by Design.**”

This highly anticipated gathering will bring together nearly 500 of Europe's most prominent hotel general managers and hospitality executives. Representing over **400 luxury hotels across 24 countries**, EHMA is a cornerstone of the continent's hospitality leadership. With more than **86,000 rooms** and **66,000 employees** under its members' management, the association's strategic direction influences service standards and travel trends worldwide.

## Celebration of 50 Years and the Future of Hospitality

Founded in **Rome in 1974**, EHMA has spent the last half-century shaping luxury hospitality through innovation, sustainability, and service excellence. As the organization transitions into its next era, the Warsaw AGM is positioned not only as a reflection of past achievements but as a launchpad for future benchmarks in European tourism and global hotel management.

EHMA President **Panos Almyrantis**, who also serves as Chief Growth & Commercial Officer at **Ella Resorts in Athens**, emphasized that this new chapter will build on EHMA's legacy while pushing boundaries. "The past 50 years have been extraordinary," he said. "Now, we are more committed than ever to innovation, sustainability, and leadership—ensuring Europe remains the gold standard in global luxury hospitality."

## Why Warsaw? A City Where Heritage Meets Modern Hospitality

Selected for its dynamic mix of history and innovation, **Warsaw** provides a compelling stage for hospitality thought leadership. The city's revitalized **Old Town**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, and its bold contemporary skyline make it a model for cities striving to balance cultural preservation with forward-looking infrastructure.

EHMA's **Vice President and National Delegate for Central Europe, Paweł Lewtak**, General Manager of **Polonia Palace Hotel**, echoed this sentiment: "Warsaw perfectly embodies the AGM's theme—'Hospitality by Design.' It reflects how thoughtful planning and collaboration can shape the future of travel experiences, blending heritage with modern service delivery."

## A Tourism and Design Agenda That Will Reshape the Travel Sector

The AGM's central theme, *Hospitality by Design*, reflects a travel industry trend that's fast gaining traction: merging **aesthetic excellence with operational innovation**. This year's sessions will explore how interior design, guest journey mapping, sustainable practices, and advanced hospitality technology can enhance guest satisfaction and brand value.

## Key highlights for the tourism and hospitality industry include:

A curated Royal & Cultural Programme to showcase Warsaw's rich arts, architecture, and culinary heritage to visiting hotel executives and their partners.

**Educational Day Conference** on March 29 at the **Renaissance Warsaw Airport Hotel**, featuring thought leaders from across the hospitality, design, and academic sectors.

**Prestigious Awards Gala Dinner** on March 29 at the **Sheraton Grand Warsaw**, honoring

top contributors to hospitality with awards like **European Hotel Manager of the Year** and the **Hans Koch Lifetime Achievement Award**.

Strategic discussions on talent development, sustainability, and market shifts driven by the **Young EHMA Group 2025** and partnerships with **EHL Hospitality Business School** and **Nolan Cornell**.

## **From Warsaw to London: What Lies Ahead for EHMA & European Tourism**

The conference will also unveil **London** as the host city for the 2026 AGM, while nominations for 2027 candidate cities will be presented. With a clear focus on continuity, growth, and global impact, EHMA's role in promoting cross-border tourism collaboration and hospitality excellence remains central.

## **Closing with Polish Warmth and International Camaraderie**

On **Sunday, March 30**, the **Ludwikowska Ballroom** at Polonia Palace Hotel will host the **Farewell Brunch**, offering delegates and guests a final opportunity to network, reflect, and forge lasting connections. This personal touch reflects the association's enduring ethos—luxury may be designed, but hospitality must be felt.

## **Impact on Regional and Global Tourism**

As the event attracts Europe's top general managers, the meeting also positions **Warsaw** as a leading destination for **MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions)** tourism. The city's prominence as a host will boost its visibility among luxury travelers and investors seeking culturally rich, well-connected urban destinations in **Central and Eastern Europe**.

Meanwhile, EHMA's forward-looking discussions on sustainability, talent, and design will ripple across the global travel industry, influencing how **hotels in Europe, the U.K., and beyond** adapt to new guest expectations in the post-pandemic era.

As EHMA steps boldly into its second half-century, the 2025 Warsaw AGM promises not just a celebration, but a blueprint for the future of luxury travel—and a powerful reminder that design, when applied thoughtfully, is the true heart of hospitality.



## **Educational Day: “Hospitality by Design”**

Saturday, 29 March, at the Renaissance Warsaw Airport Hotel

The Educational Conference hosted an array of thought-provoking speakers and expert panels discussing key trends in the industry:

**Leadership & Strategy:** Pawel Motyl addressed how to navigate complexity in high-stakes decision-making.

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**Technology & AI:** Prof. Andrzej Wodecki and Paola Gariglio discussed the role of artificial intelligence in hotel management.

**Sustainability:** Manuel Engelsthal, Christoph Steindorf

Alexa Poortier, Onno Poortier, and Andres Fellenberg Van der Molen shared insights on decarbonisation, implementing ESG strategies, and aligning with EU regulations on sustainability and corporate responsibility.

**People & Culture:** Nick Driessen and Paola Vulterini focused on inclusive leadership and creating accessible guest experiences.

**Hospitality Keynote:** Prof. Dr. Ian Yeoman offered forward-thinking perspectives on food tourism and experiential innovation.

**Design & Experience:** Joanna Jurga explored the emotional and functional impact of neuro-architecture.

**Design Keynote:** Adam D. Tihany, world-renowned designer, discussed the importance of design in creating value and delivering exceptional experiences.

**Closing Remarks:** Clare Shine emphasized the collective responsibility of the industry in driving sustainable change.

**Sports Keynote:** Szymon Marciniak, FIFA and UEFA international referee, shared valuable lessons on team leadership and managing performance under pressure.