



GLOBAL HOTEL ALLIANCE BRAND CEOS SEE STEADY GROWTH IN TRAVEL DEMAND DESPITE MARKET UNCERTAINTY

Leaders from top independent hotel brands highlight loyalty-driven resilience, US dominance, the rise of Asian markets, and European expansion at CEO meeting in Brussels

- *Positive outlook despite global uncertainty with strong Q1 results and continued momentum*
- *US top demand generator globally and particularly in Europe*
- *China and India are burgeoning outbound markets that GHA and hotel brands can tap into*
- *GHA brands generated 4.6mn room nights in Europe in 2024*
- *GHA DISCOVERY loyalty platform key to driving resilience, revenue, and repeat guests*

Brussels, Belgium, 26th June 2025: [Global Hotel Alliance](#) (GHA), the world's largest alliance of independent hotel brands, convened in Brussels last week for its annual CEO meeting, bringing together leaders from across its portfolio of more than 45 hotel brands to explore the evolving landscape of global travel – and the outlook was unanimously optimistic. Hosted at the elegant new Corinthia Hotel Brussels, the event welcomed more than 30 CEOs and senior representatives from GHA hotel brands around the world to address shared challenges and opportunities impacting the hospitality industry.

With a surge in Asian outbound travel, the sustained strength of the US market, and a solid Q1 2025 performance for GHA brands, tourism has been on an upward trajectory, they said. Leaders also aligned on the qualities essential for navigating ongoing uncertainty – adaptability, resilience, and collaboration emerged as critical to long-term success.

“We are operating in a volatile global environment, but as an industry, we have learned to adapt and stay agile in response to these fluctuations, and therefore remain optimistic,” said Chris Hartley, CEO of Global Hotel Alliance. “Travel demand is rising, particularly in the luxury and upscale segments where we specialise, and the strength of our alliance – driven by our loyalty platform, GHA DISCOVERY – positions our brands to capitalise on this momentum, particularly as many emerging growth markets are yet to reach their full potential.”

Hartley moderated the event's headline panel discussion, “Navigating the Future of Travel”, which included key insights from Simon Naudi, Managing Director & Group CEO of Corinthia Group; Barbara Muckermann, Group CEO of Kempinski Hotels; Dillip Rajakarier, Group CEO of Minor Hotels; and Choe Peng Sum, CEO of Pan Pacific Hotels Group. He opened the event with a tourism landscape snapshot, citing UN Tourism data revealing more than 300 million tourists travelled globally in Q1 2025, up 5% on Q1 2024, and 3% ahead of pre-pandemic levels. The robust performance came despite the sector facing a range of geopolitical and trade tensions, as well as high inflation in travel and tourism services.

Europe, long a bellwether for global travel trends, welcomed 125 million international arrivals from January to March, a 2% rise over 2024, led by markets like Spain, which posted 9% growth, while Turkey (+7%), Greece, Italy and Portugal (all +4%) also saw healthy Q1 2025 growth, while France reported a 6% increase for the period, according to the May 2025 World Tourism Barometer from UN Tourism.

Strong performance in Europe, with the US leading demand

The 363 properties operated by 17 GHA hotel brands in Europe delivered US\$1.1 billion in revenue from GHA DISCOVERY loyalty members in 2024. European members of GHA DISCOVERY were among the most active, spending \$733 million on the continent and \$417 million further afield.

Across the board, the US market was cited as the top international source of guests. All four CEOs confirmed that US travellers were the single largest contributor to their hotel revenues.

“One-third of our customers are from the US and this will remain a key market for us going forward,” revealed Simon Naudi, Managing Director & Group CEO Corinthia Group. “But we’re also focused on new markets in Asia. India and China have huge outbound potential, and we’re seeing more affluent travellers from these markets coming to Europe.”

Asia rising, led by China and India

Q1 2025 data from UN Tourism showed a 12% year-on-year increase in international arrivals to Asia, the fastest of any region. Panellists agreed that the burgeoning middle classes in China and India with an appetite for “experiences and exploration”, represent enormous opportunity.

“The China and India outbound markets are exploding,” said Choe Peng Sum, CEO Pan Pacific Hotels Group. “Unless you know how to tap into those markets, particularly the FIT sector, you’ll miss out. That’s where the alliance can help. We can pivot, we can be nimble – and that’s key.”

GHA’s loyalty ecosystem delivers resilience and growth

In addition to scale and reach, CEOs emphasised the unique advantage of belonging to the GHA ecosystem, empowering independent brands to maintain their identity while benefiting from collective reach and repeat business.

“The beautiful part of the alliance is that our hotels retain their DNA,” said Choe. “For the guest, that’s powerful. And it works – in Tokyo, 70% of our bookings came through GHA DISCOVERY within three months of opening.”

Dillip Rajakarier, Group CEO Minor Hotels, which operates more than 300 hotels in Europe, added: “GHA DISCOVERY offers simplicity, choice, and value; guests can choose from 850 unique hotels around the world and earn DISCOVERY Dollars (D\$) instead of complicated points, and that keeps them in the ecosystem, spending and staying with the growing number of hotels in the loyalty programme.”

Expansion continues across key global markets

All four CEOs shared significant expansion plans. Corinthia recently opened hotels in New York, Bucharest and Brussels, with Rome to follow later this year. Kempinski remains the leading luxury brand in Germany, with a history and heritage that resonates with clients in the US, Middle East and UK in particular. Minor Hotels, already Europe’s largest operator in Spain, is adding 30 hotels across the region, while Pan Pacific is using its high-performing London flagship as a launchpad for further European growth.

Barbara Muckermann, CEO, Kempinski Hotels, noted that while global headwinds exist, the outlook is positive: “Whenever there’s uncertainty, there are opportunities. We are not seeing a slowdown in travel; in fact, we believe the next five years will be exceptionally strong for our industry. China is a sleeping giant, and it’s waking up.”

Outlook for 2025 and beyond: resilient and rising

All indicators point to sustained travel growth with UN Tourism sticking to its January projection of 3% to 5% growth in international arrivals for 2025, noted Hartley.

GHA is aligned – having posted record results in 2024 with \$2.7 billion in hotel stay revenue, this upward trajectory continues in 2025 with Q1 revenue up 15% to \$746 million. Meanwhile, Minor Hotels has reported a record Q1 in 2025, revealed Minor’s Rajakarier.

The alliance also continues to grow its portfolio. With new brands like Cinnamon Hotels (Sri Lanka), Sunway (Malaysia) and Rotana joining in 2025, GHA is fast approaching the 1,000-property milestone.

“Independent brands want to remain unique, but they also want reach – that’s what GHA offers,” said Hartley. “And as more travellers look for authentic, luxurious, and experiential stays, our model delivers exactly that.”

He added: “Our goal has always been to create value for our hotel brands and GHA DISCOVERY members alike. We’ve built a platform that’s simple, powerful, and growing fast, which is key to driving resilience and repeat guest revenue.”

Photo caption: Chris Hartley, CEO Global Hotel Alliance moderated the panel discussion, “Navigating the Future of Travel”, which included key insights from Simon Naudi, Managing Director & Group CEO of Corinthia Group; Barbara Muckermann, Group CEO of Kempinski Hotels; Choe Peng Sum, CEO of Pan Pacific Hotels Group; and Dillip Rajakarier, Group CEO of Minor Hotels

For more information visit [Global Hotel Alliance](#) and [GHA DISCOVERY](#)

GHA DISCOVERY is complimentary to join, and travellers can [sign up online](#) or download the GHA DISCOVERY app and register on their mobile phones. Travellers can also connect with GHA DISCOVERY on Instagram and Facebook.

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About GHA and GHA DISCOVERY:

Global Hotel Alliance (GHA) is the world’s largest alliance of independent hotel brands with 45 brands and 850 hotels in 100 countries.

Its award-winning loyalty programme—GHA DISCOVERY—provides 30 million members recognition, D\$ rewards and exclusive experiences across its hotels and partners, both with and without a stay. GHA DISCOVERY generated US\$2.7billion in revenue and 11 million room nights in 2024.

Through membership in GHA, brands expand their global reach, drive incremental revenue and reduce dependence on third-party channels, all while maintaining management independence and individual positioning.

For more information, visit globalhotelalliance.com or ghadiscovery.com.