

Les Clefs d'Or Japan Key News



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Les Clefs d'Or Japan



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69th UICH International Congress in Madrid

By Mayako Sumiyoshi, Marie Antoinette Mori

69th International Congress – UICH Les Clefs d'Or was held in Madrid, Spain from March 30th to April 4th. About 440 members from 43 sections attended this time. Four members attended the congress from Japan as below:

- Mayako Sumiyoshi - SEAO Zone Director, Les Clefs d'Or UICH
- Aiko Imaizumi - Les Clefs d'Or Japan President
- Marie Antoinette Mori - CSR Committee
- Miki Saito - Les Clefs d'Or National Secretary

“Las Meninas,” the hotel combines two historical buildings: a 13th century monastery and the 19th century Palace of Dukes of Granada de Ega.

It is decorated like a museum, and the view from the rooftop is spectacular, a rarity in Madrid.



DAY Zero: 29 March

Sumiyoshi arrived 1 day early to attend a Zone Director meeting, so there is a little time to see around the city of Madrid.

Hotel Sight Visit – Palacio de los Duques, a Gran Melia Hotel

Member of The Leading Hotels of the World. Palace Hotel Tokyo is also a member of LHW, so I stayed for the experience. Inspired by Velázquez’s work

DAY One: 30 March

Zone Directors & Committee Leadership Meeting at Melia Madrid Princesa

Sumiyoshi attended the meeting as Southeast Asia Oceania Zone Director. Zone Directors reported their own zones activities to the Global Leaders. And Each committee chair shared their activities as well.

Arrival of delegates and Opening Gala at Teatro Kapital Members enjoyed meeting again after a long time and watching the show in a lively atmosphere.

It was a great start for the congress.

DAY Two: 31 March

General Assembly

43 section Presidents out of 44 sections and Executive Committee attended this meeting. From Japan, Ms. Aiko Imaizumi, Ms. Miki Saito and Ms. Mayako Sumiyoshi attended this meeting.

Executive Committee reports, Treasure reports, Zone director reports were shared.

The fourth generation of ZEGNA, the sponsor of this congress and who agreed with Les Clefs d'Or philosophy, was there to give a speech. He said high fashion also needs to move from Transaction to Interaction, and Emotional Connection is necessary.

CSR Activity

Ms. Marie Antoinette attended CSR Activity as CSR chairperson. She was heading to the mountains on the outskirts of Madrid for a nature clean up with the Spanish Red Cross.

Dinner Paella Night

After driving for about an hour, we arrived at a beautiful open landscape. We enjoyed Spanish music along with Spain's famous dishes—paella and Basque cheesecake



DAY Three: 01 April

Education Day at Museo Sofia Reina

Welcome speech by Mr. Miguel Sanz, Director of Turismo. He said Spain is the world's second largest tourist destination and the country where the hotel, said to be the oldest in the world, opened in 1499.

Gastronomy, Passionate, and Tax-Free shopping are the three pillars of tourism.

In recent years, the country has been working to become a sustainable tourist destination.

I was impressed by the fact that they were appealing to people to come and enjoy what Spanish people do daily, rather than doing something special, so that they not only care for the environment but also maintain the local community and culture.

Theme- Strengthening our Pillars

The dynamic and interactive workshop

Ms. Heather Byron of Alliants and Mr. Jordan Kestle of Lezern Hotel School led the lecture on how concierges should take actions against management at each hotel.

ROC (Return On Concierge), it is necessary to create a system to quantify and report to the company what kind of return is generated from the sales and services provided by concierges.

Panel Discussion

Panel discussion between Les Clefs d'Or member and Ms. Amanda Frasier, President of Ratings Forbes Travel Guide, Ms. Karen Joyce, Virtuoso General Manager UK/Ireland. The discussion reminded me of my role as a member of Les Clefs d'Or.

Powerful Speech

Ms. Maud Bailly, CEO of Sofitel, M Gallery & Emblems, gave a lecture titled "The Power of EQ. (EQ is the intelligence quotient of the mind.)EQ is required for leadership and true service by recognizing and understanding others, controlling one's own emotions and connecting with others' emotions.

In recent years, figures show that the Luxury Market has been declining, but the Luxury Experience is on the rise. She stressed that The Concierge should be an EQ Ambassador and introduced case studies of members who are active in the brand. Maya Angelou's words **"People may forget what you said or what you did, but people never forget how you made them FEEL"** are the most important words that we keep in mind during our work. Luxury is all about people. She drew the audience into her story to a standing ovation



Country Dinner at Luzi Bombon

Most Asian members gathered and enjoyed the dinner. This was a wonderful opportunity of networking with Asian members. Each section brought a prize for a lucky draw.



Puy Du Fou Historical Show

A theme park located in Toledo, an hour away from Madrid, and enjoyed a show highlighting major events from Spanish history.

DAY FOUR: 02 April

Tour of The Royal Palace of Aranjuez and the Palace Gardens

Declared as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2021, the Palace was one of the official Spanish royal residences built in the 16th century. It was opened to the public in 1931 with management entrusted to Patrimonio Nacional.



DAY FIVE: 03 April

Open Forum at Hotel RIU Plaza attended by all members from 9:00 to 17:00.

Welcome Speech by Les Clefs d'Or International President, followed by Welcome Speech of Les Clefs d'Or Spain President was given.

After the welcome speech reports from different sections were shared.



Tour of historical town of Chinchon with lunch at Meson Cuevas del Vino Chinchon is a historical town built in the 15th century. The Plaza Mayor has hosted many royal festivals, theatre, bullfights and other events.

Afternoon session of the Open Forum General Assembly

The following topics were reported.

- Executive Committee Reports
- Award Committee Report
- Highlighting 2025 process of selection and introducing candidates
- Statutes Commission final update
- Announcement of newly elected Executive Committee & Zone Directors
- Announcement & Presentation of future meetings & congresses

2025 Asian Congress Host, Boracay Philippines

2026 Congress Host, Sydney Australia

2027 Congress Host, Bangkok Thailand

Tokyo Japan offered a bid for 2030 Congress Host

- Open discussion BOD & delegates.

Japan also did a presentation about the Osaka Kansai Expo 2025 held from April until October in Osaka 2025.

Gala Dinner at Palacio de Cristal Cibeles

Flamenco entertainment provided by award-winning Corral dela Moreira.

Announcement of Young Leader Award winner – Gregor Maximilian Kock of Austria.



DAY SIX: 04 April

Departure of delegates

Participating in the Madrid Congress has significantly enhanced networking and collaboration opportunities, allowing for meaningful knowledge-sharing that supports professional growth. The focus on continuous professional development and acquisition of new skills has been particularly valuable. It has contributed to improved customer and delegate care, reflecting a strong commitment to service excellence.



MONTHLY MEETING

March

The regular monthly meeting in March was held in the conference room at Palace Hotel Tokyo. It began with president Ms. Imaizumi's policy speech, and the unanimous agreement of all 30 members. It was officially decided that Ms. Imaizumi would continue as president for the next 2 years. After that, it has been exchanged within the members who participated in this meeting.

We visited The Museum of the Imperial Collections, Sannomaru Shozokan for a guided tour led by Mr. Hiroyuki Toda from the Curatorial Planning and Education, Curatorial Department.

Each piece of artwork was extremely beautiful, and the preservation state was excellent. It was a very special time where we felt the history and depth of each art piece.



April

The regular monthly meeting in April was held in a conference room at the Imperial Hotel Tokyo. It began with a brief report from President Ms. Imaizumi on the Les clefs d'Or International Congress in Madrid, followed by discussion on tourism site inspections.

Key figures were introduced, including the new president of International Les clefs d'Or for this term as well as executive members and Zone directors.

The new President of International Les Clefs d'Or Mr. James Ridenour, greeted us online with a very warm speech.

In the second part of the meeting, representatives from Oricom Co.,Ltd. provided information about projects led by the Japan Tourism Agency, insights into the expected number of overseas visitors to Japan in the future, as well as their purposes for visiting. They provided us with site inspections of several tourist destinations in Japan.

