



INTERCONTINENTAL® MARSEILLE – HOTEL DIEU

*The InterContinental Marseille - Hôtel Dieu is not just any member of the BeMed Business Club : **this magnificent hotel is the host of the first pilot project of the BeMed Club**, which ambition is to demonstrate that we can, in the long term, eliminate or replace all single-use plastics in hotels!*



Florent KOHLER is the representative of the InterContinental Marseille - Hôtel Dieu within the Club

The Covid did not spare the hotel sector... Did this affect your decision to join BeMed?

I have to say no, not really... The protection of the environment was already a very important subject for the tourism sector, and we were already aware of the challenges of plastic pollution in the Mediterranean. Moreover, within the IHG group, of which our hotel is part, a dynamic has been underway since 2018 to eradicate single-use plastics such as straws and bathroom miniatures. At the InterContinental Marseille - Hôtel Dieu, we just wanted go further than the rest of the group by participating in the pilot project "the single-use plastic free hotel" that BeMed proposed to us.

So, now the BeMed Business Club's first project takes place in your hotel, what does that imply?

It is a significant investment in time and energy because the ambition of the project is high: it is about eliminating or replacing all single-use plastics in the hotel in the long term. In the short term, we want to demonstrate, in real conditions in our hotel, that it is possible to reduce very significantly the use of these plastics. So far, we have built a methodology that allowed us to identify all plastic products and packaging in the hotel and prioritize them. Once this prioritization is over, we

will know precisely where to focus our efforts. Either way, staging this pilot project requires the strong involvement of all staff, from management to room staff.

We want to participate actively in making the elimination of single-use plastics a norm in the hotel industry.

Other hotels are part of the Club, is it a competition problem for you?

No because we are not really in direct competition. But even if we were, I would share our best practices on environment protection with them because I don't think there is a competitive advantage in keeping it a secret. Customers do not make their choice only on this criteria and we want to participate actively in making the elimination of single-use plastics a norm in the hotel industry. Moreover, we benefit from being several hotels involved in the pilot project, to brainstorm on solutions or share contacts of plastic alternatives suppliers for example. At the end of the project, we would like to publish a guide for all hotels that would like to reduce their consumption of single-use plastics, so you see, competition is not really a concern.

Talking about that, have you had the opportunity to communicate about your commitment to the BeMed Club?

Yes of course! I have been invited to several events to present our pilot project

with BeMed. These events are an opportunity to meet with people who are not from the hotel industry and show them that luxury is not incompatible with current environmental challenges when one is really willing to find solutions. We also communicate our commitment on the project to our customers. Individuals appreciate that the hotel is in line with ecological practices they try to respect at home. And for corporate customers, it is increasingly important to work with partners who demonstrate their commitment through concrete projects.

Do you have any other concrete initiatives underway?

Yes, we have several In circular waste management, for example. We set up a closed-circuit compost system within the hotel, which allows us to fertilize our vegetable garden with aromatic herbs ourselves. We also are in partnership with an association which recycles the used solid soaps of the hotel to distribute them to people in need. And in relation to the Mediterranean and its biodiversity, we should be contributing soon to a project that will preserve hundreds of square meters of coastline until 2050 to install fish "nurseries".