

WLN 'Energize Your Business' Conference in Mumbai 22 – 25 November 2023



Conference Report

The WLN Autumn Conference 2023 marked the *first time in five years that a WLN conference had been held outside of Europe!* For many delegates, it was the first time they had visited India, and Mumbai gave us a fantastic opportunity to explore what India offers. Our conference hotel was the impressive **Oberoi** in Nariman Point, offering stellar views of Mumbai and the bay.

The motto of our conference: *'Energize yourself, energize your team, energize your business, energize your network'* inspired many of our business and social activities, and we thank all of our delegates and partners for bringing their best **energy** to our conference!

Huge thanks are due to our wonderful hosts, **India Law Offices**. Their team, led by Managing Partner and WLN Director **Gautam Khurana**, made every effort to ensure we enjoyed a wonderful time in Mumbai; with many opportunities to learn about the city's history, culture, and significance within India and the world.

Business program Thursday 23rd November:

We met for our internal network conference in the Sunset Lounge, overlooking Marine Drive, on Thursday morning. It was great to listen to and participate in the following presentations and discussions across Thursday:

- **'Introduction to Heartfulness':** **Dr Nivedita Shreyans** is a certified wellness trainer affiliated with the Heartfulness Institute, a global non-profit dedicated to building peaceful, healthy, and holistically educated communities worldwide. After giving us a taste of meditation early on Thursday morning, she joined us at our conference to explain her work within Heartfulness Institute.

- **'The importance of being a Mindful Leader in a Corporate World':** **Mr Manish Behl** is a mindfulness expert mentoring professionals and budding entrepreneurs on balancing between professional's work life & EQ. He founded Beyond Mind and is also the founder of Mindfulness India Summit (Asia's Largest and first ever Emotional Intelligence and Mindfulness Summit). His session delved into ancient Indian teachings and how its lessons can impact our experience of life today.
- **'The Financial System in India and what it can offer to Foreign Business':** **Mr Surinder Chawla** a veteran banker, is the Managing Director & CEO of Paytm Payments Bank (India's only mobile-first bank). Mr Chawla's presentation addressed how India plans to move towards being in the top 3 economies in the world, followed by taking us through the levers of growth and government initiatives in place in India.
- **'Green Energy: From Sustainable Cities to Business Efficiency':** The panel discussion was moderated by **Carlo Gurioli** (bureau Plattner), and our panellists were **Ramon Ridder** (Labré advocaten), **Ilse Renders** (Everest Law), **Andreas Klow** (Flood Herslow Holme), **Abhishek Hans** (India Law Offices), and **David Elvira Benito** (Bufete Mañá-Krier-Elvira). Their interesting presentations included information about EU regulations on buildings and energy; renewable energy; and Power Purchase Agreements.

Our network has grown this year, and for the first time, WLN has a member firm in UAE. It was fantastic to be joined by **Fauzia Khan** from **Paoletti Legal Consultants**, who introduced the firm on Thursday morning.

We were delighted to also welcome guests from **SG Global Advice** in Kazakhstan: **Zhanar Kassymbekova**, and **Aselina Tulegenova**. Thank you for joining our conference, it was wonderful to learn more about your firm and practice.



Business program Friday 24th November:

For the second day of our business program, our delegates participated in an industry event organised by the **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)**, with knowledge partner **India Law Offices**.

The esteemed speakers gave us an overview of the **Make in India** program before we dived into panel discussions, covering the following topics:

- **Foreign Investment: A Catalyst to India's Manufacturing Ambitions**
- **Leveraging New Gen Tech Innovation through Foreign JV**

Wim Weijers (Keizers Advocaten) gave a special address to the audience on **'How to forge stronger connections & bridge gap between India & the European Union (EU)?'**

After lunch, B2B meetings were facilitated and attended by many Indian companies, all keen to learn more about business opportunities in our network's represented jurisdictions.



Evening programs 22nd – 24th November:

All three of our dinners not only delivered excellent food, but also great opportunities to network and interact (and dance) with each other.

On Wednesday evening we were invited to dinner by India Law Offices at the rooftop restaurant/bar **Zerua**. With glistening views of the Mumbai skyline, it was a special setting for our welcome dinner (see photos below!). **Thank you to Gautam and his team for hosting a wonderful welcome dinner and evening.**

We traversed Mumbai by night on Thursday evening on Victorian electric carriages, passing by (and learning about) sights including the Rajabai Tower, the Town Hall, and the Horniman Circle. Afterwards, we made some new mocktail friends at **Ditas**, namely Firecracker, Cutie Pie, and – a personal favourite – the Virgin Mojito. The Dry Day did not dampen our spirits as we tucked into some delicious small plates and never-ending dessert platters.

Friday night kicked off with a team-building extravaganza at the award-winning **Masque**. All of our efforts to energize ourselves culminated with over two hours of **Bollywood Dance** tutorials, followed by two rounds of competitions. The videos of all of the groups will be treasured for years to come (I heard that someone has already applied for the next season of Strictly Come Dancing). **Well done to Group 4** - Ramon, Slavi, Desislava, Charis, Ilse, Andrea, and Hannah - for topping the leaderboard!



Social programs Wednesday 22nd and Saturday 25th November:

On Wednesday afternoon, some of us took part in a **Heritage Tour of Mumbai** facilitated by **Khaki Tours**, which saw us travelling across the city to various significant sites and historic buildings. The varied architecture of the city was fascinating to see and learn about, as were the ancient religious sites we visited.



Our Saturday social program was a trip to explore the **Elephanta Caves**. Mainly dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva, the caves are a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is safe to say that we chose a very hot and humid day to be trekking through Elephanta Island, but nevertheless it was interesting to see the caves (and monkeys) and especially exciting to explore the final cave on our tour - see photos below!



Thank you, **India Law Offices**, for hosting a memorable conference in vibrant Mumbai!

Will you join us at our next conference in Spring 2024?
We look forward to seeing you in...

LONDON!

16 – 18 May 2024