



MEDIA RELEASE

Spa (Belgium), 22nd March 2022

World Water Day 2022 Historic Thermal Towns celebrate water across Europe

Every year at Historic Thermal Towns we celebrate the United Nations World Water Day on 22nd March. It's a time when our water sources, at the centre of each of our thermal spa towns and thermal regions are celebrated and promoted with talks, tours, concerts and events. Some of the highlights this year include:

- **Baden bei Wien**, Austria – guided tours to explore the sources of “yellow gold” and fantastic bathing stories and tell you about the bathing culture, as well as the launch of some new tourism products.
- **Bad Kissingen** has an extensive programme for World Water Day including Guided walks/tours throughout the town: Water technology in history and today; From brine to salt; Experience refined salt; Maxbrunnen: History, springs protection and techniques. There is also an exhibition - "Ground Water and World Heritage in Bad Kissingen" in the Wandelhalle.
- **Budapest** in Hungary is launching online quizzes and surveys on the 22nd and then putting on free guided tours with a prize draw to the famous baths - Széchenyi, Gellért, Rudas, and Lukács as well as mineral water tasting tours. In all nearly 200 people will be able to take part on these tours.
- **Caldas da Rainha**, Portugal, is holding a special concert and will be opening restored historic fountains.
- Ourense, Spain is running two main activities. Popular free water yoga lessons held Tues to Sun at the just-reopened thermal spaces of Outariz and Burga de Canedo. Also on March 22nd, local tourist guides will be offering three free tours around the hot springs of As Burgas, explaining the importance of water sources (and underground waters) in the history of Ourense.
- **In São Pedro do Sul**, in Portugal, there's a whole day of free activities that includes a guided walk, films about the water origin and its importance and, a guided tour to the natural spring and geothermal system and a thermal experience
- **Wiesbaden**, Germany - World Water Day talks and tours kick off a whole year of celebrating a Year of Water. A new statue of a spear, representing the founding myth of Wiesbaden will also be unveiled on World Water Day.
- **One of our newest members, Varaždinske Toplice** has organised a concert at the archeological site AQUAE IASAE in the old Roman Basilicum. First Ode to Joy (written in Baden bei Wien) will be played by brass section from Music School Varazdin and afterwards jazz duo- guitar and saxophone- will play jazz classics.

The United Nation's theme for World Water Day this year is “**Groundwater, making the invisible visible**”. Almost all of the liquid fresh water in the world is groundwater. It is everywhere but in many places it is overexploited, leading to ground shrinkage, and water shortage and insecurity for local communities.

Mr José Manuel Baltar Blanco, President of EHTTA released a short video highlighting the importance of thermal water sources and groundwater. See the whole speech here: <https://youtu.be/L-GHC099jPs>

Mr Baltar said:

“While we celebrate our thermal water springs it is difficult not to be reminded millions of people do not have good access to clean stable water sources, for drinking, sanitation, food production and industrial processes. We are also mindful of the thousands of people in the Ukraine and other areas affected by war and conflict that cannot access clean water.

However we can't be complacent about our water sources, and we need to keep discussing the sustainable use of thermal water resources and thermal energy from our water sources so that we innovate to ensure that our thermal towns and regions are attractive sustainable destinations.”

A short survey is available to complete this year (What'Spa). It was developed to find out what local people think about their spa town in the past, present and future, as well as what thermal water means to them. It has been created in Microsoft Forms in all the languages of the Association, and can be taken in about 5 minutes by people of all ages. <https://ehтта.eu/world-water-day/>

- ENDS –

For further information please contact:

Simone Zagrodnik, EHTTA Executive Director: simone.zagrodnik@ehтта.eu



contact@ehтта.eu



www.ehтта.eu



[@ThermalTravels](https://www.facebook.com/ThermalTravels)



[@ehттаThermal](https://twitter.com/ehттаThermal)



[EHTTA Association](https://www.youtube.com/EHTTAAssociation)



[@european_historic_thermaltowns](https://www.instagram.com/european_historic_thermaltowns)



[European-Historic-Thermal-Towns-Association](https://www.linkedin.com/company/European-Historic-Thermal-Towns-Association)

#ThermalTravels

#MySpaTown

#Cultural Routes

#HistoricThermalTowns

Notes to Editors:

1. World Water Day on 22nd March each year is a global observance day set up by the United Nations to highlight issues connected to water. www.worldwaterday.org
2. Since 2013, EHTTA members have been celebrating the water sources at the heart of their towns on World Water Day to reinforce the importance of our waters and the history behind them to local residents as well as visitors, welcoming everybody to explore our fascinating world of health, tradition and well-being. On World Water Day our member towns and thermal regions can give access to their heritage and healing springs in interesting and unusual ways, and really tell the story of their thermal springs and sources and celebrate the water itself.
3. This year's UN theme is **Groundwater: Making the Invisible Visible**, and the UN is encouraging people to share how Groundwater affects their lives.

4. EHTTA is a membership organisation representing nearly 50 members in 18 countries.
5. The President of EHTTA is Mr José Manuel Baltar Blanco, who is also President of Partenalía, and the President of the Deputación Ourense (the Provincial Council of Ourense)
6. EHTTA was certified as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe in 2010 and is one of 38 Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe which provide a wealth of leisure and educational activities for all citizens across Europe and beyond and are key resources for responsible tourism and sustainable development. The certification "[Cultural Route of the Council of Europe](#)" is a guarantee of excellence.
7. EHTTA was founded in 2009 with six Founding Members: Acqui Terme (Italy), Bath (UK), Ourense (Spain), Salsomaggiore Terme (Italy), Spa (Belgium) and Vichy (France).
8. EHTTA is an Associate Member of the UNWTO. The Association is delighted to be part of the UNWTO's Work Programme for 2022 and will be organizing a major conference on Thermal Tourism on 27-29th September 2022 in Ourense, Spain.