



MEDIA RELEASE

Spa (Belgium), 26th August 2022

International Thermal Tourism Congress in September in Ourense.

The European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA) is organising an “**International Congress on Thermal Tourism**” with the participation of the UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization). The Congress, hosted by the Province of Ourense (Deputación de Ourense) an Ourense Council, with the support of the Galicia Region (Xunta de Galicia) will run from 27th to 29th September 2022 in Ourense.

EHTTA, which is also a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe was delighted to be included in the UNWTO’s work programme for 2022, and with this prestigious Congress, will be reaching a global audience to examine the phenomenon of “thermal tourism”. Three major themes will run through the Congress: **Tourism, Heritage, and Experience.**

EHTTA is delighted to announce that **Her Majesty Queen Sofía of Spain** is the Patron of the Congress Honorary Committee, where all supporting institutions and associations are represented (see detailed list below). There will also be a very special guest to start the proceedings on the first morning – Andriy Kulchynsky, Mayor of **Truskawez** (also known as **Truskavets**), a famous spa resort in Ukraine, close to the Polish border, which dates back to the 15th century.

Opening with a special event on **UNWTO World Tourism Day** (27th September) and connecting to Termatalia (the bi-annual thermal fair in Ourense), the Congress is designed to be a celebration of thermalism and tourism and the combination of the two.

The President of the Province of Ourense, and EHTTA President, Manuel Baltar said:

“The experience and enthusiasm of EHTTA members in this area (Galicia Region, Province of Ourense, and Ourense Council) and the fact that there has not been a “thermal tourism” congress for a few years was part of the inspiration and impetus behind the application to the UNWTO Affiliate Members Department for their support in developing THE Thermal Congress. As President of Ourense Government and the

President of EHTTA I am delighted to be able to welcome delegates to Ourense in September, truly the “main **thermal province**” of Spain, and Europe during this time!

I am also excited about the timing of the Congress, in the **200th Anniversary year of the Province of Ourense** and the **Holy Year of the “Camino de Santiago”, Xacobeo 2021-2022**. This has given us the inspiration to invite delegates to take part in a “thermal camino” – a combination of thermal tourism and pilgrimage, which delegates can experience for the benefit of body, mind and spirit, for a few days before or after the congress.

We also have a new connection to Madrid with the **High Speed AVE train**, dramatically cutting journey times, and with sustainability in mind, I hope that delegates will consider arriving by train as well as by air.

European Historic Thermal Towns’ members present best practices

One particular highlight within the congress programme will be a “thermal evening event” at the Outariz Spa, on the outskirts of Ourense. That evening the so-called “Bathrobe Addicts” (originally “Les Across du Peignoir” in their native France) will be seen for the first time in Ourense. EHTTA Member “La Route des Villes d’Eaux du Massif Central”, where this movement originated, successfully launched this promotional brand and movement five years ago, and it was also adopted by the Belgian thermal town of Spa two years later. Now, in 2022, the Bathrobe Addicts “go international” and will be introduced and presented in Ourense.

Workshops and discussions with key partners

On the second day of the Congress, delegates have the opportunity to join workshops featuring important partners of Historic Thermal Towns: the network of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe and the European Travel Commission. A third workshop is dedicated to European funding for tourism. The afternoon will also include the opportunity to learn more about the implementation of certain projects and strategies from around the world.

For more information and to register for the Congress, go to www.thethermalcongress.com.

- ENDS -

See below for further information.

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Historic Thermal Towns on Social Media



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#ThermalTravels #HistoricThermalTowns #Cultural Routes #MySpaTown

Organizer and Host

European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA)

Deputación de Ourense (Ourense Province)

Supporting Institutions and Associations

UNWTO United Nations World Tourism Organisation, Affiliate Members Department

Galicia Region (Xunta de Galicia)

Ourense Municipality

TERMATALIA International Fair of Thermal Tourism, Health and Wellness

Great Spa Towns of Europe Association

Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

European Spa Association (ESPA)

International Society of Medical Hydrology and Climatology (ISMH)

Notes to Editors:

1. EHTTA is a membership organisation representing nearly 50 members in 17 countries.
2. EHTTA was certified as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe in 2010 and is one of 48 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.
3. EHTTA was founded in 2009 with six Founding Members: Acqui Terme (Italy), Bath (UK), Ourense (Spain), Salsomaggiore Terme (Italy), Spa (Belgium) and Vichy (France).