EUROPEAN HISTORIC THERMAL TOWNS

Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe
Itinéraires culturels du Conseil de l'Europe

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MEDIA RELEASE

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EHTTA & MEMBERS AT ITB BERLIN 2026:
EUROPEAN SPA CULTURE WITH GREAT PRESENCE AND SUCCESSFUL

ITB Berlin, the world's largest tourism trade fair, was taking place in Germany's capital from March 3rd to 5th, 2026. The European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA) had once again the opportunity to present and discuss topics related to their thermal destinations in the Medical & Health Pavilion. Several member towns and regions from the Association have taken the opportunity to be present in person with EHTTA: first time participants were **Baden (Switzerland), Spa (Belgium) and Viterbo (Italy)**, joined by repeating participant **Montegrotto Terme (Italy)** as exhibitors in the dedicated segment.

Supported in the panel discussions and presentations by other EHTTA Members **Caldes de Montbui (Catalonia/Spain)** and **Bursa (Turkey)** the network contributed to the ITB Medical & Health educational programme while at the same time supporting the association's visibility:
Isabelle Grégoire, Tourism Director from Spa (Belgium) took stage with her dynamic presentation **"Spa – The Original: A legacy in water, speed and bathrobe"** and Andrea Portmann, Tourism Director from Baden (Switzerland) shared insights to **"Mindfulness in Smart Economics"** bringing her experience and strategy for her destination on stage.

Moderated by EHTTA Executive Director Simone Zagrodnik, Isidre Pineda (mayor of Caldes de Montbui) and Chiara Frontini (mayor of Viterbo) together with Arzu Kutucu Özenen, Sustainability Advisor to the Municipality of Bursa in Turkey and Melita Bartoš, Head of Sales and Marketing at Daruvar Spa in Croatia exchanged on the subject of latest investments and future plans in their towns in a panel titled **"WhatSpa? Thermal destinations investing in their future".**

The dynamic talk **"From heritage to hashtags"** moderated by Ivana Kolar from Croatia touched on EHTTA's latest project launch: EHTTA´s Communications Manager Marta Lima shared the association´s first TikTok experiences and ambitions. She gave an insight to the work behind and the challenges of finding the right message for the very specific audience together with strategy experts Dario Marčac and Dijana Domonkoš from Crew Media.

"Integrated care - Wellness and Medicine" was discussed with Alina Huseynli, Director of the Institute of Balneology and Spa Karlovy Vary and Member of the EHTTA Scientific Committee, Claudia Wagner, Managing Director at FITReisen GmbH, Dr László Puczkó, Consultant HTWW Life and Lana Petrović Blajić, Independent Tourism Advisor, Croation Chamber of Economy.

"We are satisfied with this ITB 2026", says Simone Zagrodnik, Executive Director. "Besides the rich programme it was a successful event to re-connect with important stakeholders and representatives from other thermal destinations, national tourist boards, associations and institutions from Europe and beyond."

- ENDS -

Historic Thermal Towns on social media

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Notes for Editors

1. EHTTA is a membership organisation representing **53 members in 20 European countries*** and two international partners in overseas.
2. EHTTA was **certified as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe** in 2010 and is one of 49 thematic routes of the programme. Launched by the Council of Europe in 1987, Cultural Routes demonstrate, by means of a journey through space and time**,** how the heritage of the different countries and cultures of Europe contributes to a shared and living cultural heritage.

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).
4. Since 2019 EHTTA has been an Affiliate Member of UN Tourism, signing a Memorandum of Understanding on Thermal Tourism with the global organization in 2022. In November 2025 it received the UN Tourism recognition for "Innovative knowledge and product development".
5. In September 2022, EHTTA signed the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Change in Tourism as supporting partner.
6. EHTTA is advisory partner in charge of communication in the Interreg Europe project "GreenSPAS – Improving public policies of European spa towns and regions facing climate change".

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