



MEDIA RELEASE

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INSPIRING & SUCCESSFUL EHTTA GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN CALDAS DA RAINHA (PORTUGAL)

More than 60 representatives from 16 countries celebrated the **Spring General Assembly of the European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA) from 6–8 May in Caldas da Rainha (Portugal)** with impressive visibility from the first moment: the network united with Mayor Vitor Marques and EHTTA President Riccardo Mortandello to kick off the three days with a walk of the **"Bathrobe Addicts"** through the town centre.

The Portuguese historic spa town has not only a strong heritage related to its healing mineral waters, it also has a very strong identity as a place of ceramics traditions. The crossing of these two thematic pillars in the town's history was celebrated during the **"Café of Europe – Crossing Heritage: Thermal Waters and Ceramics"** on Wednesday, 6 May at the Art Center, with speakers such as Councillor Conceição Henriques, José Antunes (Head of Culture) and Benedetta Diamanti (Director of the European Route of Ceramics) taking the floor. The event was streamed live and is available at <https://www.youtube.com/@HistoricThermalTowns>

On the occasion of the **statutory General Assembly meeting on 7 May**, the EHTTA members officially welcomed new members Baden (Switzerland) and Balıkesir (Türkiye). An important item on the agenda was the election of the Executive Council for a four-year mandate. The newly formed group **confirmed the existing board** with President Riccardo Mortandello (Mayor of Montegrotto Terme), Vice Presidents Isidre Pineda (Mayor of Caldes de Montbui), Eric Brut (General Director of Route des Villes d'Eaux, France), Markos Danas (Secretary General of Hellenic Association of Municipalities with Thermal Springs, Greece), Victor Leal (CEO of Termas de São Pedro do Sul) and Isabelle Grégoire (Director Tourist Office Spa, Belgium).

This important day was celebrated with a gala dinner hosted by the Municipality of Caldas da Rainha in the evening.

On Friday, 8 May, the Portuguese Spa Association **"Termas de Portugal"** together with the Municipality of Caldas da Rainha organised a conference introducing the thermal system of



EUROPEAN HISTORIC THERMAL TOWNS

Cultural route
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the country to the European and local audience in the framework of the "EHTTA Forum" - the association's format to create space for education and exchange among its members.

"A heartfelt thermal thank you to the Municipality of Caldas da Rainha and especially the team organising this wonderful programme for our membership, who was able to learn so much not only about thermalism in Portugal but also about the richness of cultural heritage in this town," concludes Simone Zagrodnik, Executive Director.

The next General Assembly of EHTTA will be held in Loutraki (Greece) from 20–22 October 2026.

- ENDS -

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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"](#).

*Member States of the Council of Europe