



**EUROPEAN HISTORIC  
THERMAL TOWNS**

Cultural route  
of the Council of Europe  
Itinéraire culturel  
du Conseil de l'Europe



# ANNUAL REPORT

2025



## FOREWORD

Throughout the year, our commitment to fostering collaboration and partnership remained at the core of our activities, bringing together members and stakeholders across borders and disciplines.

A particular highlight was the Thermal Tourism Congress held in Budapest in June, which set a new benchmark for our work. The event achieved remarkable visibility and reinforced the growing international recognition of our sector.

Our General Assembly in Baile Herculane in May, including the celebration of another “Bathrobe Addicts” event on Europe Day, offered new and memorable experiences for our members. At the Autumn General Assembly in Montegrotto Terme, the Mayors’ Meeting and EHTTA Forum generated valuable new ideas and forward-looking visions for the future work of EHTTA, both on political and technical levels.

Another important milestone was the development and introduction of the new EHTTA logo, symbolising both renewal and continuity in our shared identity.



*Riccardo Mortanello*

**RICCARDO MORTANELLO**  
President

***The year 2025 marked a significant stage in the continued development of our association, as we further strengthened our position and deepened our European and global network.***

The Scientific Committee also began its renewed activity under the leadership of Chair Hans Hornyik, with the addition of new members strengthening its expertise and capacity.

Internally, the EHTTA Office expanded its team, enhancing its ability to support daily operations, administration, and project implementation more effectively.



*Simone Zagrođnik*

**SIMONE ZAGROĐNIK**  
Executive Director

A driver of our collaborative work has been the GreenSPAS Interreg Project, which enabled members to participate in study visits to Baden bei Wien and Montegrotto Terme. These exchanges provided valuable insights into climate change adaptation strategies and policy approaches across different countries, enriching our shared knowledge base.

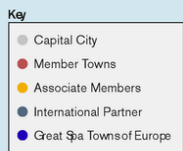
Membership also continued to grow, with the welcome addition of Hisarya as EHTTA’s first Bulgarian member, as well as the return of the Bursa Culture and Promotion Union, further strengthening our network.

Finally, the recognition by UN Tourism for “Innovative Knowledge and Product Development” at the General Assembly in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, marked a fitting conclusion to a busy and highly successful year for EHTTA.

# EHTTA MEMBERSHIP

## DECEMBER 2025

As of 31st December 2025, EHTTA represents a vibrant network of **51 historic thermal towns** and regions across **19 countries**, along with two **International Partners** outside Europe. In 2025, the Association welcomed Hisarya (Bulgaria) and Bursa Culture and Tourism Promotion Union (Turkey).



### EHTTA's membership encompasses a range of categories:

- **Active Members:** Historic thermal towns and cities with rich spa heritage (e.g. Montegrotto Terme, Ourense, Bath, Vichy, Spa, etc.).
- **Associate Members:** Regions or associations of thermal towns (e.g. Route des Villes d'Eaux du Massif Central in France, Catalan Thermal Towns Association, Budapest Spas).
- **International Partners:** Non-European spa heritage sites (Saratoga Spa State Park / New York, USA and Poços de Caldas, Brazil).

Throughout 2025, EHTTA continued to encourage membership growth. The network's diversity enriches collective expertise in thermal tourism and facilitates cross-border exchange.

The Association's Membership Committee and Scientific Committee carefully review new membership applications to ensure that candidate towns meet the criteria of historic significance and active thermal heritage, thereby maintaining the quality and reputation of the network.

Ten of our EHTTA member towns belong to the "Great Spa Towns of Europe", a transnational serial world heritage site inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 2021.



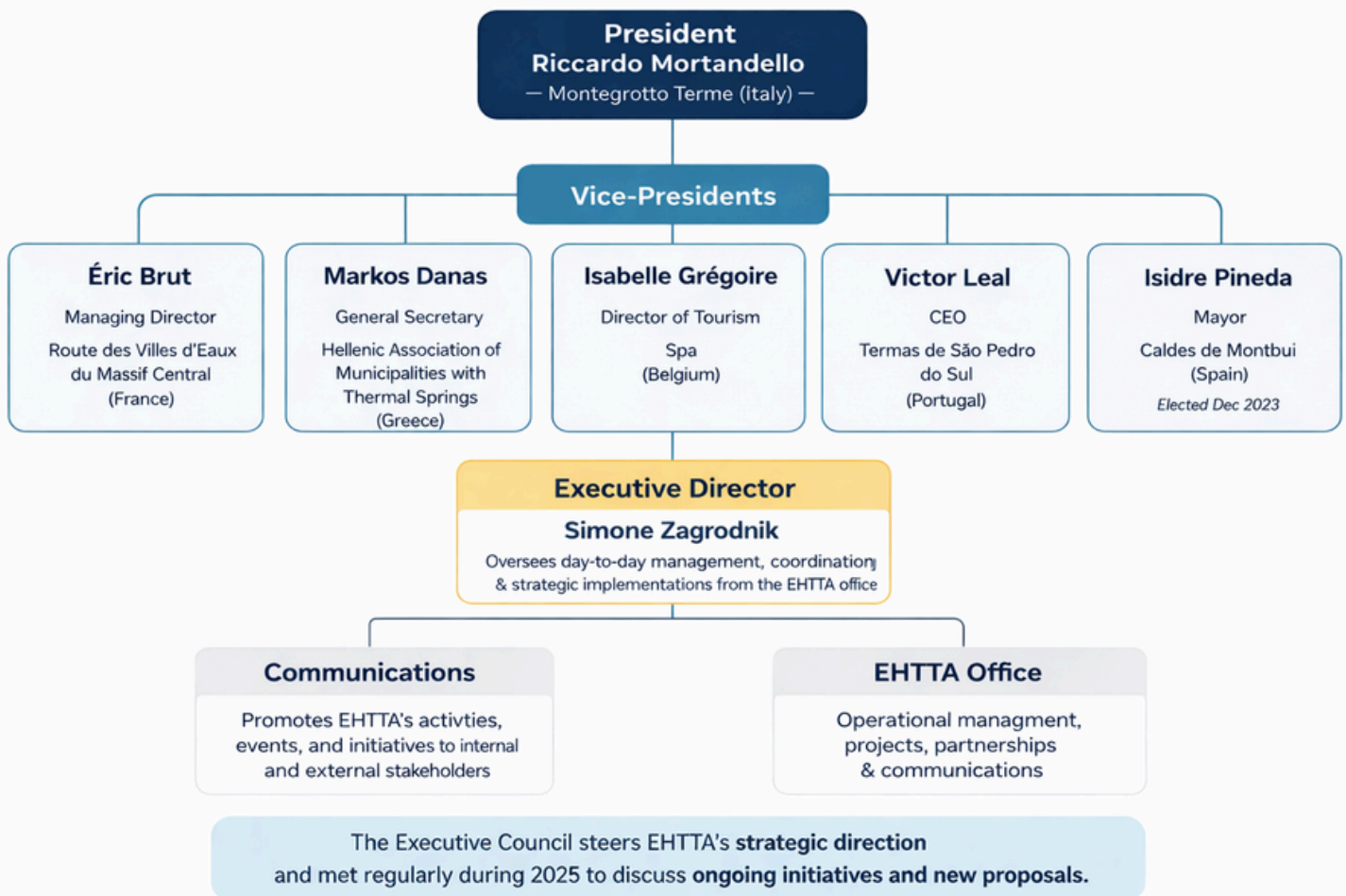
# GOVERNANCE

## EHTTA BODIES AND ADMINISTRATION

Throughout 2025, the Executive Council and the Board remained unchanged and continued in office, under the presidency of **Riccardo Mortandello**.

### EHTTA Executive Team & Governance – 2025

Organisational Structure



## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETINGS

The EHTTA Executive Council met twice in 2025 to discuss and bring forward the strategic developments of the Association.

Executive Council Meetings took place on;

- **24th January 2025 Paris**
- **3rd September 2025 Online**

Membership approvals took place by decision by circulation.

## EHTTA EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

2022 – 2026 EFFECTIVE 30TH NOVEMBER 2023

EHTTA Member	Country	Name of political representative	Role	EHTTA Position
Montegrotto Terme (Active Member)	Italy	Riccardo MORTANDELLO	Mayor	PRESIDENT
La Route des Villes d'Eaux du Massif Central (Associate Member)	France	Eric BRUT	General Director	VICE PRESIDENT
H.A.M.T.S. (Associate Member)	Greece	Markos DANAS	Secretary General	VICE PRESIDENT
São Pedro do Sul (Active Member)	Portugal	Vitor Manuel Figueiredo delegating Victor LEAL	President Termas de S. Pedro do Sul	VICE PRESIDENT
Spa (Founding Member)	Belgium	Nicolas Tefnin delegating Isabelle GRÉGOIRE	Director Tourism	VICE PRESIDENT
Caldes de Montbui (Active Member)	Spain	Isidre PINEDA MONCUSÍ	Mayor	VICE PRESIDENT
Acqui Terme (Founding Member)	Italy	Danilo RAPETTI	Mayor	
Baden bei Wien (Active Member)	Austria	Carmen JEITLER-CINCELLI	Mayor	
Caldas da Rainha (Active Member)	Portugal	Luís PATACHO	Councillor	
Daruvar (Active Member)	Croatia	Damir LNENIČEK	Mayor	
EuroCity Chaves-Verín (Associate Member)	Spain	Gerardo SEOANE FIDALGO	General Director	
Łądek-Zdrój (Active Member)	Poland	Zadaj PYTANIE	Mayor	
Le Mont-Dore (Active Member)	France	Sebastien DUBOURG	Mayor	
Ourense (Founding Member)	Spain	Gonzalo Pérez JÁCOME	Mayor	
Deputación de Ourense (Associate Member)	Spain	Luis MENOR	President	
Royat (Active Member)	France	Isabelle COQUEL	Vice Mayor	
Vichy (Founding Member)	France	Yves-Jean BIGNON	Vice Mayor	
Galicia Region (Associate Member)	Spain	Xosé Manuel MERELLES	Director Tourism	
Wiesbaden (Active Member)	German	Christine HINNINGER	Councillor	
Scientific Committee President	Austria	Hans HORNYIK		

## SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE COMPOSITION, ROLE AND ACTIVITIES

2025 was an important year for EHTTA's Scientific Committee: It was election year. The new team is providing expert advice on cultural heritage, history of thermalism, and sustainable tourism. Hans Hornyik (Austria) agreed to serve as the President of the Scientific Committee.

Hans is supported by Alina Huseynli (Czechia), Lisa Poetschki (Germany), Lea Lemoine (France), Dan Buru (Romania) and Fabrizio Caldara (Italy).



*Science gives heritage a future, and heritage gives science a purpose.*

**Under his guidance the Scientific Committee provided:**

**Expert Guidance:** The Chair of the Scientific Committee paid a visit to Hisarya (Bulgaria) in the framework of the application assessment. During his visit he gained very useful information on the historic development of the city. In addition to his meetings with the Mayor and Vice Mayor, Hans Hornyik also conferred with Bulgaria's Minister of Tourism, during which he introduced and provided insights into EHTTA.

**Membership Evaluation:** Committee members reviewed applications from candidate towns (like Hisarya, Bulgaria) to ensure they meet EHTTA's criteria of historical significance and active thermal culture. Their recommendations informed the Executive Council's membership decisions, thus maintaining the quality of the network.

**Projects and Research:**

- Re-evaluation of the membership application process and requirements. The SC created a revised version of the questionnaire that was edited by Hans Hornyik and Lisa Poetschki. This task has an ongoing coordination within the SC, most recently with support from Andrea Schaer (Baden, Switzerland). The technical implementation is currently underway.
- The SC also worked on the definition of the terms "European Historic," "Thermal," and "Town," and the resulting refinement of the association's admission criteria. This was a collaborative effort by the SC, and the team was able to accomplish it within the framework of the existing bylaws.

## TEAM & OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

The daily management of the European Historic Thermal Towns Association is overseen by Executive Director Simone Zagrodnik, who mainly operates from Taunusstein near Wiesbaden (Germany).

The **financial management** of the Association is contracted to the **Route des Villes d'Eaux du Massif Central (France)**, with **Marion Roussel** as the responsible manager and **Éric Brut** as the responsible director.

**Marta Lima** is taking care of all things **Communication**, including Social Media Management. Her role is divided between supporting the **GreenSPAs** project (70%) and contributing to EHTTA's overall communication efforts (30%), also providing assistance to the Executive Director across various areas.

**Great achievements are built on collaboration, trust, and shared purpose.**



As of February 1st, 2025, **Sandra Wenzl** joined the team as **Office and Project Manager**. Sandra is working part-time, and both remote and in presence with Simone at the EHTTA office in Taunusstein near Wiesbaden (Germany).



# GENERAL ASSEMBLIES

## BĂILE HERCULANE, ROMANIA

Spring General Assembly - 7-9 May 2025

The Spring General Assembly of 2025 was hosted in Romania, in the spa town Băile Herculane. The event, organised by the municipality of Băile Herculane, marked an important milestone for EHTTA's expanding international presence.



The General Assembly, EHTTA's highest decision-making body composed of all members, met twice in 2025.



The programme opened on 7th of May with the Meeting of the Scientific Committee, held at the historic Hotel Versay and a meeting of the EHTTA Board. In the afternoon, the official part of the programme started with a guided study tour introducing the towns history and thermal heritage: Tiefs Cave, Roman's Bath, introduction to the Forest Healing Concept, Hercules statue and Central Parc (Casino area). In the evening, the Municipality of Băile Herculane hosted a Gala Dinner at the historic Casino.



The formal General Assembly took place on 8th May 2025, where members reviewed ongoing projects, approved the 2026 provisional budget, and set strategic priorities for the coming year. Delegates also participated in technical visits to Băile Herculane's spa facilities and cultural heritage landmarks, offering insights into Romania's rich thermal history and its potential for future collaborations.



On 9th May, Europe Day, the “Café of Europe” took place at the historic Casino discussing the topic of “Restoring Thermal Heritage”. There was a great celebrating unity and the Festival of Minorities with traditional food, music and dances. The “Bathrobe Addicts” Event took place right in the middle of the celebrations - a perfect way to show the bathrobes initiative! The movement and brand was introduced by Vice President Éric Brut, General Director of Route des Villes d'Eaux du Massif Central, where the idea originates from.



# GENERAL ASSEMBLIES

## MONTEGROTTO TERME, ITALY

Autumn General Assembly - 24-26 September 2025

Hosted by EHTTA President Riccardo Mortandello, Mayor of Montegrotto Terme and his municipality, EHTTA members met for the association's autumn general assembly in late September, joining a full programme of meetings, thematic sessions, technical visits, and festive moments.

The 3-day event opened on 24th September with the Workshop "Understanding GenZ/Alpha - TikTok as a strategic tool" at the Hotel Mioni Royal San, supported by our partners from CrewMedia. Immediately following the both entertaining and informative lesson on Social Media, the Mayors' Meeting took place. Elected representatives from the participating member towns and the EHTTA Board got together for their semiannually meeting in the City Hall.

In the afternoon, the crowd gathered for the EHTTA Forum with two presentations (Introduction to thermal system of Italy and Montegrotto Terme - a destination's strategy and projects) and a Workshop on EHTTA's strategic questions.



The day ended festively with the Gala Dinner at Villa Selvatico hosted by the Municipality of Montegrotto Terme. The Venice Rondò Ensemble and a folkloric group in Venetian costumes delighted the audience with their skills.



On Thursday, 25th September, EHTTA Members came together for the 2nd statutory General Assembly Meeting of the year welcoming their new Active Member Hisarya (Bulgaria) and Bursa Culture and Promotion Union (Türkiye) as Associate Member both represented by their mayors and their delegations.

EHTTA President Riccardo Mortandello, Mayor of Montegrotto Terme, welcomed various media during the following press conference, joined by his Vice Presidents and Executive Director.



Following this spirited opening, the group proceeded to the Y-40, the world's deepest thermal water pool for a technical visit, discovering both the historical significance and modern offerings of the establishment.

After lunch, the delegates went on an educational visit in the area of Abano and Montegrotto Terme by bus including an introduction and visit to the thermal mud production and a visit to the development area of the future "thermal camping" site.

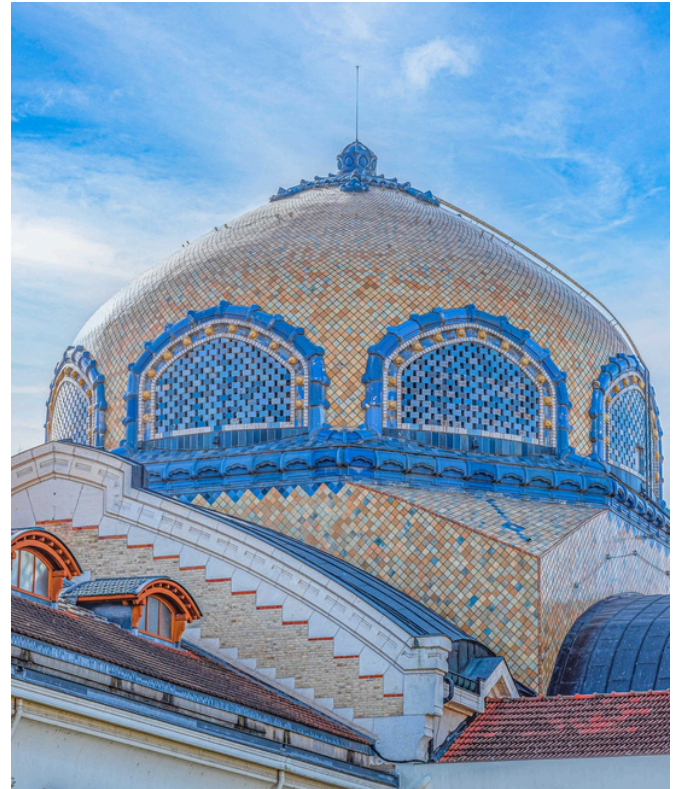


The event closed with a thematic evening at Hotel Marco Polo under the motto "Ancient Romans".

## COUNCIL OF EUROPE CULTURAL ROUTES PROGRAMME

As a certified Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, EHTTA continued in 2025 to promote the shared values of European cooperation, cultural dialogue and heritage enhancement. Through its network of historic thermal towns, the Association contributed to strengthening the visibility of thermal heritage as a meaningful part of Europe's cultural identity.

EHTTA remains committed to fostering exchange between territories, institutions and professionals, encouraging joint reflection on sustainability, accessibility, innovation and the transmission of knowledge. In this framework, the Cultural Routes Programme continues to offer an important platform for collaboration, mutual learning and the promotion of a more connected and inclusive European heritage.



***The Cultural Routes are grass-roots networks promoting the principles which underlie all the work and values of the Council of Europe: human rights, cultural democracy, cultural diversity, mutual understanding and exchanges across boundaries.***

***They act as channels for intercultural dialogue and promote a better knowledge and understanding of European history.***

*Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Website, [coe.int/routes](https://coe.int/routes)*

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



The 2025 Training Academy took place in Torres Vedras, Portugal, from 11 to 13 June. Due to a scheduling overlap with EHTTA's own Thermal Tourism Congress, held in Budapest the previous week, the Association was unable to attend this year.

## ANNUAL ADVISORY FORUM - CAPPADOCIA (TURKEY), 22 - 24 OCTOBER 2025

Each year in autumn, the Cultural Routes Annual Advisory Forum is organised in close collaboration with one of the member states of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (EPA).

The 14th Annual Advisory Forum was organised by EPA and the European Institute of Cultural Routes, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Türkiye and the Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency. The topic of the forum was "**Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe and Landscapes: Advancing Heritage Protection through Cultural and Sustainable Tourism**". Executive Director **Simone Zagrodnik** was there on behalf of EHTTA and represented its interests and goals.



The 2025 forum reflected the growing urgency of protecting Europe's natural and cultural landscapes in the face of increasing climate change, pollution, and development pressures. Recognising landscapes as repositories of natural, living, tangible and intangible heritage, the event emphasized the role of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in safeguarding heritage through sustainable, even transformative cultural tourism practices.

This focus is especially fitting, given the exceptional setting of Cappadocia and the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention.



## TOURISM & B2B

### ITB BERLIN 4-6 MARCH 2025



For many years EHTTA has been present at ITB Berlin, the world's leading travel trade show, which in 2025 featured fully booked halls and a record of 5,800 national and international exhibitors from over 170 countries.

As part of the Medical & Health Tourism segment in Hall 4.1, the association presented Europe's historic thermal destinations and highlighted the growing importance of sustainable wellness and health tourism at its own individual stand. EHTTA Members Montegrotto Terme and Catalan Thermal Towns Association joined as co-exhibitors.

They also actively participated in the educational programme of the special segment with presentations and panel discussions.

Among the various topics presented was a panel discussion "Thermal Destinations facing Climate Change" looking at the collaboration aspect of project like GreenSPAS Interreg Europe Project, in which EHTTA is an advisory partner. Communications manager Marta Lima and project partners shared their first experiences with the project.



In the presence of President Riccardo Mortandello, Vice President Isidre Pineda and Executive Director Simone Zagrodnik, EHTTA used the global platform of ITB Berlin to strengthen international cooperation, meet strategic partners and welcome other EHTTA members' delegations and representatives.



## 365 TOURISM CONFERENCE

OPATIJA (CROATIA), 30 September 2025

In September 2025, EHTTA Executive Director Simone Zagrodnik participated in the 365 Tourism Conference in Opatija, Croatia as a panelist in the panel discussion “Building the next (health) economy”.

Focusing on tourism development, trends, and the future of the sector, the event is one of the most influential annual gatherings of tourism leaders in Croatia and SE Europe.

It brings together top experts, decision-makers, and innovators to discuss the key challenges and opportunities shaping the Future of the sector; health tourism has been a focal point for many years.



## ESPA BALNEOLOGY CONGRESS

HAAPSALU (ESTONIA), 8-10 October 2025

EHTTA's Vice President Markos Danas participated at the annual European Spas Association (ESPA) Balneology Congress in Haapsalu (Estonia), taking place from 8th to 10th October 2025, where he presented the GreenSpas Project to the audience and EHTTA's role as advisory partner.

He emphasized the importance of this project and explained that GreenSPAS aims to facilitate knowledge exchange among the organizations, with focus on energy generated from renewable sources and protection against climate change.



During the conference, key topics concerning the operation of thermal spring facilities and wellness centers across Europe were addressed. These included the digitization of services and the return on investment from a public-sector perspective, particularly in relation to preventive healthcare. Special emphasis was also placed on the 55+ age group and their specific needs in the context of thermal spring usage.

These can serve as examples for new projects. Another important aspect is a reduction in the operating costs of thermal spring facilities, which have skyrocketed in recent years, causing problems for profitability.



## FORRESORT INTERNATIONAL FORUM TBILISI (GEORGIA), 27 November 2025

In November 2025, the 3rd International Forum in Georgia brought together industry leaders, experts, and stakeholders to discuss the latest trends, innovations, and future prospects in resort development. The forum focused on creating sustainable, modern destinations that meet the evolving needs of travelers while contributing to economic growth and social well-being.

President Riccardo Mortandello from Montegrotto Terme took part and spoke about key themes such as sustainable resort development, innovation in wellness tourism, and the future of spa destinations. EHTTA Members Budapest Spas and Route des Villes d'Eaux du Massif Central were present, too.



## EHTTA EVENTS

### THERMAL TOURISM CONGRESS, BUDAPEST - 4-6 JUNE 2025

From June 4–6, the International Thermal Tourism Congress 2025 brought together leading voices from across Europe and beyond to explore how thermal destinations can evolve in a rapidly changing world. Hosted by the European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA) and Budapest Spas, in partnership with Ensana Health Spa Hotels and with the support of UN Tourism, the congress was held at the iconic Thermal Margaret Island Health Spa Hotel.



Over the course of three days, **140 participants from 30 countries** - including municipal leaders, tourism professionals, researchers, and wellness operators - convened in Budapest, a city where thermal culture seamlessly blends tradition and innovation. Together, they examined the key forces shaping the future of thermal tourism. The program explored not only traditional pillars such as sustainability, health, heritage, and investment, but also addressed emerging trends influencing modern travelers. In today's fast-evolving travel landscape, discussions centered on how thermal towns can remain relevant to new generations. Sessions examined the influence of digital platforms like TikTok, the importance of storytelling and local identity, and the need to create authentic, experience-based offers that resonate with younger audiences.

**“Within this context, UN Tourism is giving increased priority to the topic of thermal tourism and to this important segment.”**

Ion Vilcu, Director of Affiliate Members & Public-Private Collaboration Department at UN Tourism.

Recent market insights underscored the congress themes. Tripadvisor's Trendcast 2025 reported a 157% surge in bookings for thermal spas and hot spring destinations between 2022 and 2024. Travel Predictions 2025 by Booking.com revealed that six in ten travelers now plan their journeys around well-being objectives.

“These trends confirm that thermal tourism has transitioned from a niche segment into a mainstream, year-round driver that supports local economies and benefits communities,” said Ion Vilcu, Director of Affiliate Members & Public-Private Collaboration Department at UN Tourism.



## THERMAL TOURISM CONGRESS, BUDAPEST - 4-6 JUNE 2025

Several speakers underlined the urgency of future-proofing the sector by striking a balance between innovation and tradition. There was consensus that the next wave of growth will come from destinations able to combine historical value with smart communication, immersive wellness, and meaningful sustainability.



Riccardo Mortandello, EHTTA President remarked in his opening speech: “Our objective is to create an important coordination point and networking hub among thermal culture and heritage destinations, realities that have the unique characteristic of simultaneously caring for cultural tourism and health tourism, two dimensions that in our destinations merge into a unique and unrepeatable experience.”

***“European thermal systems are living systems that undoubtedly contribute to improving people's quality of life.”***

Riccardo Mortandello

Held in the spirit of cooperation and dialogue, the congress also included the Mayor’s Summit, a platform for political leaders to exchange strategies for sustainable destination management, and a B2B networking session linking destinations with tour operators and buyers. A highlight was the gala dinner at the historic Gellért Baths, a symbol of Budapest’s spa legacy and a fitting setting for celebrating the enduring appeal of thermal heritage.



**The European Historic Thermal Towns Association is planning to organise the next Thermal Tourism Congress in Spa (Belgium) in early June 2027.**



# THERMAL TOURISM CONGRESS, BUDAPEST - 4-6 JUNE 2025



**Session#1: The Ugly Truth of Operating Thermal Destinations. A Roundtable Talk chaired by Simone Zagrodnik. With László Puczkó, Fabrizio Caldara and Mária Botta.**



**Session#2: The Thermal Tourism Market – Global Perspectives. A session with Fabrizio Orlando, Miguel Gallego, Frank Halmos and Claudia Wagner.**

**Session#3: Where Is the Evidence? What Certain Market Segments Understand & Expect? A session with Ali Ghamman, Alina Huseynli, Eva Ruzicska and Janka Zalesakova, chaired by Csilla Mezösi.**



**Session#4: Defining & Creating A New Thermal Destination: Thermal Tourism as additional opportunity to main tourism concept. Chair and Presentation: Markos Danas. With Ahmed Aloraij and Dr. Ngamnid Saennampol.**

**Session#5: Tired of TALKING? What has really been done? Transitions - Thermal destinations moving to action and innovation. A session with Marion Roussel, Edvardas Citvaras and Victor Leal, chaired by Simone Zagrodnik.**



## THERMAL TOURISM CONGRESS, BUDAPEST - 4-6 JUNE 2025



**Session#6: Investing to Thermal Hospitality, chaired by László Puczkó. A session with Andrew Gibson, Mark Hennebry, Vladan Vešković, Nike Schröder and Riccardo Mortandello.**



**Session#7: Thermal Heritage in Tourism: New Interpretation of Thermalism, a session chaired by Szilvia Czinege. With Gábor Kálmán, Marion Schneider and Paul H. Song.**



**Session#8: "Tik-Tok"isation of Thermal Bathing: Demand Generation & Awareness Raising. A session with Yannick Blättler, Dario Marčac, Dijana Domonkoš and Ivana Kolar. Chaired by László Puczkó.**

**Session#9: The Future of Health, The Future of Thermalism, chaired by Melanie Smith. With the INTERSPACE Youth Project and Dr. Andrea Velich (EUCharme Project Hungary).**



**Session#10: Longevity - Facts, Hype, Viral Trend? With Petra Bailey, Dr. Eva Ruzicska and Dr. János Kóka.**

# THERMAL TOURISM CONGRESS, BUDAPEST - 4-6 JUNE 2025



**Session#11: Did You Know? Discovering Thermal Destinations Around the Globe.** With András Simon, Dr. Marcus Coplin, Hiroshi Tanimura and Charles Davidson.

**Session#12: More Reality! Heritage As Constraints vs Critical Foundation for Return.** A session chaired by Chiara Ronchini. With Dr. Tamas Fejérdy, Anke Matthys and Barbara van der Wee.

**EHTTA: Publication on Thermal Tourism with Mario Crecente, László Puczkó and Simone Zagrodnik.**



**CLOSING SESSION - from the ugly truth to the future of thermalism with Szilvia Czinege, Simone Zagrodnik and László Puczkó.**

**MEDIA COVERAGE**  
The Congress attracted media attention and was featured in Spa Business magazine.

## UN TOURISM RECOGNITION

The European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA) has been selected for a distinguished recognition by the UN Tourism Affiliate Members Department for Innovative Knowledge and Product Development.

On the occasion of the Plenary Session of UN Tourism Affiliate Members held in the context of the General Assembly of UN Tourism in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) from 7-11 November 2025, EHTTA representative and Executive Director Simone Zagrodnik received the recognition during a recognition ceremony from the Director of Affiliate Members and Public-Private Collaboration Department Ion Vilcu.

***A major milestone for 2025: EHTTA was recognised by UN Tourism for its work in Innovative Knowledge and Product Development.***



“This recognition reflects the remarkable outcomes achieved through EHTTA’s efforts in advancing Thermal Tourism. Thanks to your continued commitment, together we have successfully organized the International Congress on Thermal Tourism with the support of UN Tourism in Ourense (2022), Nancy (2023), and Budapest (2025).

These events have seen an increasing participation of Affiliate Members and destinations, expanding interest in thermal tourism and contributing to enhanced visibility and engagement of this important thematic area within the network of Affiliate Members,” Vilcu stated.



EHTTA President Riccardo Mortandello expressed the association’s gratitude by saying “EHTTA extends its heartfelt thanks to the UN Tourism Affiliate Members Department for this prestigious recognition, their continued support and encouragement for bringing thermal tourism on the global agenda.

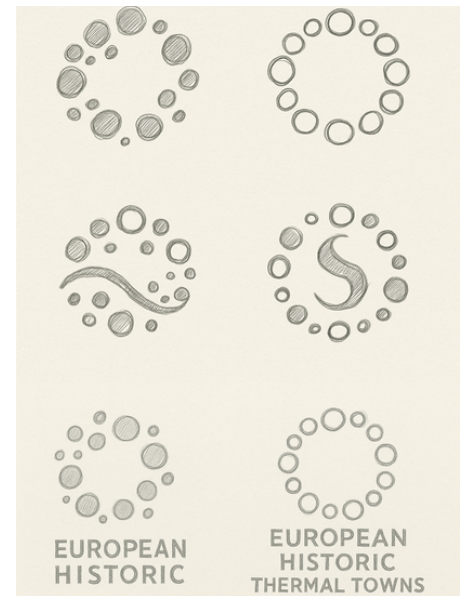
We are very much looking forward to continuing this great collaboration in the years ahead. Over the past two years, EHTTA has strengthened its connections with Affiliate Members worldwide, greatly enriching its knowledge and understanding of global best practices in thermal tourism.”

## NEW BRANDING

### DEVELOPING EHTTA'S NEW IDENTITY

In 2025, EHTTA made significant progress in developing its new brand identity, transforming earlier reflection into a concrete visual and communication proposal for the future of the network. The aim was to strengthen coherence, visibility and recognition, while preserving the values and heritage at the heart of EHTTA.

The first draft was presented in May 2025 during the General Assembly in Baile Herculane, opening a phase of feedback and discussion with members. Throughout the year, the process evolved through benchmarking, concept development and design refinement, shaped by key ideas such as heritage, healing, collaboration, diversity, culture, water, sustainability and knowledge.



The new branding process aimed not only to refresh EHTTA's image, but to express more clearly who the Association is, what it represents, and how it wishes to be recognised across Europe.



# EHTTA

2.0

The new logo and visual system were designed to balance continuity and renewal, while improving adaptability across digital, print and promotional materials. Supported by the Tourism Commission, the process laid a strong foundation for the future rollout of a more coherent, professional and recognisable EHTTA identity.

The process was coordinated at communication level by Marta Lima, Communications Manager, supporting the articulation and development of the new visual identity throughout 2025.



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# GREENSPAS PROJECT

## EHTTA'S ROLE AND CONTRIBUTIONS

As advisory and communication partner in GreenSPAS, EHTTA continued to supported the project's visibility, dissemination and knowledge exchange throughout 2025.

Key moments included the second Interregional Workshop in March, the third study visit in Baden in April, and the participation of GreenSPAS in the International Thermal Tourism Congress in Budapest in June, where the project was presented as a practical example of sustainable transition in thermal destinations. These activities reinforced EHTTA's role in linking policy learning, sustainability and European thermal heritage.

### PROJECT PARTNERS

- Route des Villes d'Eaux du Massif Central (FR) – Lead Partner
- European Historic Thermal Towns Association (BE) – Advisory Partner
- Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship (PL)
- Municipality of Baden (AT)
- Municipality of Birstonas (LT)
- Municipality of Montegrotto Terme (IT)
- Lithuanian Innovation Centre (LT)
- Viseu Dão Lafões Intermunicipal Community (PT)



Co-funded by the European Union

## STUDY VISITS AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

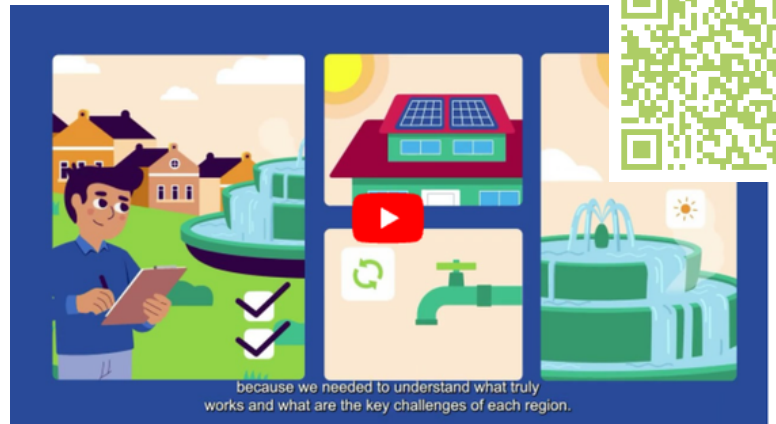
### GreenSPAS



In 2025, GreenSPAS study visits remained a key tool for interregional learning and policy exchange. A major milestone was the third study visit in Baden bei Wien (Austria), from 22 to 26 April 2025, followed by the fourth study visit in Montegrotto Terme (Italy), from 7 to 9 October 2025. These moments allowed partners and stakeholders to explore practical approaches to climate adaptation, geothermal innovation and sustainable spa tourism, while strengthening cooperation between thermal territories across Europe.

**A further communication milestone in 2025 was the launch of the first GreenSPAS project video, helping to strengthen the project's visibility and public communication.**

Watch it here:



# PARTNERSHIPS & COOPERATIONS

## RAIL EUROPE ONLINE CAMPAIGN



EHTTA developed and implemented the digital campaign “The Original Hot Spots”, in partnership with Rail Europe, with the objective of repositioning Europe’s historic thermal towns as timeless wellness destinations.

The campaign was carried out over the summer period, across approximately two months (July to mid-August), aligning with peak travel season and audience engagement.

It was deployed primarily through digital channels, including EHTTA’s social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram), as well as website content and SEO-driven blog publication, ensuring both visibility and discoverability.

### The campaign aimed to:

- Reposition Europe’s historic spa towns as the original wellness destinations, combining heritage, wellbeing, and cultural depth
- Increase visibility and attractiveness of thermal towns across European markets
- Promote a more sustainable and mindful way of travelling, in connection with rail mobility
- Strengthen EHTTA’s communication through its partnership with Rail Europe

***Come for the calm. Stay for the heat.***  
***The Original Hot Spots***



Watch the campaign video:



The campaign generated strong visibility and engagement across digital platforms, achieving midterm:

- 537,000 impressions
- 242,000 video plays
- 7,800 link clicks

## LUFTHANSA CITY CENTER & EHTTA Strategic Cooperation 2024/2025



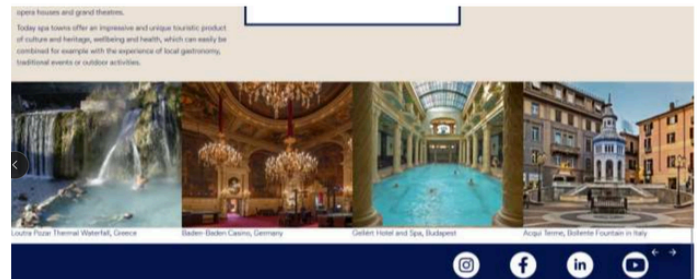
Launched in 2024, EHTTA's collaboration with Lufthansa City Center continued into 2025 as a follow-up phase focused on sustaining visibility and extending the impact of the campaign within the LCC network.

This continuity helped reinforce EHTTA's positioning as a relevant cultural and wellness destination partner for international travel professionals.

### myLCC Banner

### LCCYou

Tip of the week



Staff e-magazine  
March Issue  
Reach: 5.700 LCC employees

In 2025, EHTTA was featured in the March issue of LCCYou, Lufthansa City Center's staff e-magazine, reaching approximately 5,700 employees across the network.

As a result, the campaign maintained editorial visibility for EHTTA and its destinations, supported continued awareness among LCC professionals, and provided additional exposure for related tourism packages.

# PARTNERSHIPS & COOPERATIONS

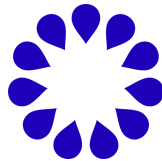
## BUILDING STRONGER NETWORKS AND SHARED OPPORTUNITIES

EHTTA further consolidated its network of partnerships and cooperations, strengthening ties with key institutional, sectoral and promotional actors at European and international level.

These collaborations contributed to enhancing the Association's visibility, supporting advocacy and knowledge exchange, and creating new opportunities for the promotion of historic thermal towns and thermal tourism.



### KEY INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS



**GREAT SPA TOWNS**  
*of Europe*

### EHTTA IS A MEMBER OF



### MOST IMPORTANT PARTNERS AND COLLABORATIONS IN 2025



**ITB BERLIN** | The World's Leading Travel Trade Show®



**Lufthansa City Center**

**European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA)**

Registered Address:  
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Rue de l'Hôtel de Ville, 44  
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**@HistoricThermalTowns**

#HistoricThermalTowns



**EUROPEAN HISTORIC  
THERMAL TOWNS**

Cultural route  
of the Council of Europe  
Itinéraire culturel  
du Conseil de l'Europe

