



MEDIA RELEASE

16th September 2026

EHTTA WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS ESCALDES-ENGORDANY (ANDORRA) AND KYUSTENDIL (BULGARIA)

The European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA) has news to share: The organisation, certified as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, has grown to 55 members across 21 European countries, along with two international partners.

Two new membership applications have recently been approved. EHTTA is delighted to welcome **Escaldes-Engordany (Andorra)** and **Kyustendil (Bulgaria)** to the network as active members.

The addition of **Escaldes-Engordany** also marks an important milestone for the association, as Andorra becomes the latest country to join our network.

Escaldes-Engordany lies at the heart of the Pyrenees. It is a town deeply connected to its thermal waters, a natural resource that has shaped its history, driven its economic development and helped define its urban landscape. For centuries, the hot springs rising from deep within the mountains have been harnessed, giving rise to a thermal culture that has evolved alongside the territory. Today, water remains an essential part of Escaldes-Engordany's identity — a thread connecting the landscape and memories of the past with the town's contemporary life.

Kyustendil is a historic spa town in southwestern Bulgaria, located near the border with North Macedonia. The town is famous for its natural hot mineral springs, which have been used for healing and relaxation since ancient times. During Roman times, Kyustendil was an important thermal centre known as Pautalia.



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Today, visitors can enjoy its thermal baths, wellness facilities, parks, and beautiful surrounding mountains. Kyustendil combines its rich spa heritage with history, culture, and nature, making it a popular destination for relaxation and tourism.

“We very much appreciate the accession of a second Bulgarian thermal town to our network within one year. Bulgaria plays an important role in thermal tourism in Europe, both from a historical perspective and as a modern health destination,” comments EHTTA President Riccardo Mortandello. He continues: “The fact that we can now also welcome Andorra, with its rich thermal heritage and traditions, to our network further strengthens our collective knowledge and understanding, while highlighting the importance of thermalism even in a small country.”

The addition of Escaldes-Engordany (Andorra) and Kyustendil (Bulgaria) represents an important step towards EHTTA's strategic objective of further expanding and consolidating its network of historic thermal destinations across Europe, while strengthening international cooperation and partnerships.

- ENDS -

Historic Thermal Towns on social media



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Notes for Editors

1. EHTTA is a membership organisation representing **55 members in 21 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



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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*