



MEDIA RELEASE

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EHTTA AUTUMN GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN LOUTRAKI (GREECE): THREE NEW MEMBERS STRENGTHEN EUROPE'S THERMAL NETWORK

The European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA) held its **Autumn General Assembly in Loutraki (Greece) from 20-22 October 2026**, bringing together nearly 60 representatives from 17 countries to welcome new members, exchange knowledge and discuss the future of Europe's historic thermal towns.

The three-day event took place under the auspices of the **Hellenic Ministry of Tourism** and the **Hellenic Ministry of Culture**. Distinguished guests included **Christos Dimas**, Greek Minister of Infrastructure and Transport, and **Athina Korka**, Deputy Regional Governor for Culture of the Peloponnese. The meeting was chaired by EHTTA **President Riccardo Mortandello** and hosted by **Giorgos Gkionis**, Mayor of the Municipality of Loutraki-Perachora-Agioi Theodoroi.

On Tuesday, 20 October, the **European Thermal Heritage Day** brought together Greek and international speakers to explore the historical development of thermalism in Greece during the first half of the 20th century and its connections with the wider European thermal tradition. Hosted at **Loutraki Thermal Spa**, the programme included a welcome speech by the Ministry of Culture highlighting the importance of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme and a presentation of **Afroditi Kamara** introducing the upcoming publication on Greek thermal heritage. The programme closed with a visit to the historic thermal spring. The event was streamed live and is available at [European Thermal Heritage Day Loutraki](#)

A key highlight of the **statutory General Assembly meeting on 21 October** was the welcoming of three new members: **Escaldes-Engordany (Andorra)**, **Kyustendil (Bulgaria)**, and **Birštonas (Lithuania)**. With these additions, EHTTA's network now spans **58 members in 22 Council of Europe member countries** plus 2 International Partners, further strengthening its European reach. Representatives from Termal in Yalova (Türkiye) also attended as observers following the municipality's application for membership.



On Thursday, 22 October, the **Mayors' Meeting** took place at Loutraki City Hall chaired by EHTTA President Riccardo Mortandello and Vice President Isidre Pineda.

With two parts of the **"EHTTA Forum"** as interactive and practical parts of the programme it was ensured that the participants from all over Europe not only exchanged on latest developments and projects in their own towns, they also educated themselves during a small conference focusing on the thermal systems of Greece and Loutraki.

Alongside the formal meetings and discussions, participants enjoyed a memorable programme celebrating Loutraki's unique character and thermal heritage. On the second day, the **"Bathrobe Addicts"** took to the town centre for a seaside stroll in their bathrobes, creating a cheerful and colourful spectacle followed by **"A Historical Narrative: 100 Years of Loutraki as a Spa Town"**. A musical performance by a quintet was watched by Loutraki's citizens who joined for a special moment: As evening fell, a spectacular drone show lit up the sky, providing a memorable surprise and a fitting highlight to the festivities.

"Warm thanks go to the Municipality of Loutraki-Perachora-Agioi Theodoroi and, in particular, to the dedicated team who made this memorable programme possible. Our members had the opportunity to discover Loutraki's rich thermal heritage, explore its cultural and historical treasures, and experience the warm hospitality of the local community," emphasises Simone Zagrodnik, EHTTA Executive Director.

The next General Assembly of EHTTA will be held in Karlovy Vary Region (Czech Republic) from 13–16 April 2027.

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Notes for Editors

1. EHTTA is a membership organisation representing 58 members in 22 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.



EUROPEAN HISTORIC THERMAL TOWNS

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



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*