



MEDIA RELEASE

29th October 2026

European Thermal Heritage Day 2026 in Loutraki Explores the Development of Greek Spa Towns

The European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA) celebrated **European Thermal Heritage Day 2026** with a high-level expert forum dedicated to the development of spa towns in Greece during the first half of the 20th century. Held in Loutraki as part of **EHTTA's Autumn General Assembly**, the event brought together historians, architects, heritage specialists and tourism experts to share research, explore Europe's thermal heritage and deepen understanding of Greece's rich thermal tradition.

Organised by the **EHTTA Scientific Committee** under the auspices of the **Hellenic Ministry of Culture**, the forum combined historical research with architectural perspectives, highlighting the social, economic and cultural significance of thermalism in Greece and its connections with wider European developments.

Following the welcome and introduction by **EHTTA President Riccardo Mortandello** and representatives of the **Ministry of Culture**, the programme featured a series of expert presentations.

Historian and **cultural heritage consultant Afroditi Kamara** explored Greek thermalism from antiquity to the modern era, presenting insights into the history of thermal infrastructure, practices and spas. **Historian Melina Kostidi** examined the role of spa resorts in the social and economic life of the early modern Greek state between 1830 and 1930.

Architect Maria Tsitimaki discussed cosmopolitanism and spa architecture in Greece at the beginning of the 20th century, while **tourism specialist Eva Psatha** explored Loutraki's cosmopolitan identity through advertising and hotel architecture.

The programme also extended beyond Greece to examine the broader European context. **Isabelle Brown, heritage curator and researcher**, presented housing architecture and urban development in the thermal towns of Auvergne, France, between 1918 and 1950. **Hans Hornyik, Chair of the EHTTA Scientific Committee and spa heritage specialist**, explored European



spa architecture between the two World Wars, drawing on examples from Austria, Italy, Germany, the United States and Taiwan.

Concluding the presentations, **art historian Despoina Lampada** shed light on the **artist Stefanos Xenopoulos** and the mosaics of Loutraki's Rotunda, connecting the town's artistic heritage with its thermal history.

The forum encouraged an exchange of knowledge across disciplines and countries, demonstrating how historical research and architectural heritage can contribute to a deeper understanding of Europe's thermal towns.

The afternoon concluded with a walk to **Loutraki's historic thermal spring and Rotunda**, where participants had the opportunity to admire the remarkable mosaic work and taste the town's thermal water. This visit offered a tangible connection between the expert discussions and the living heritage of Loutraki.

EHTTA extends its sincere thanks to the **Hellenic Ministry of Culture and its representatives, particularly Patricia Masouraki and Fotis Vlachos**, for their support. Special appreciation goes to all the speakers for sharing their research and expertise, and to **Hans Hornyik, Chair of the EHTTA Scientific Committee**, for coordinating the event in collaboration with the Greek team.

Link to the recording: [European Thermal Heritage Day Loutraki](#)

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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,



EUROPEAN HISTORIC THERMAL TOWNS

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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*